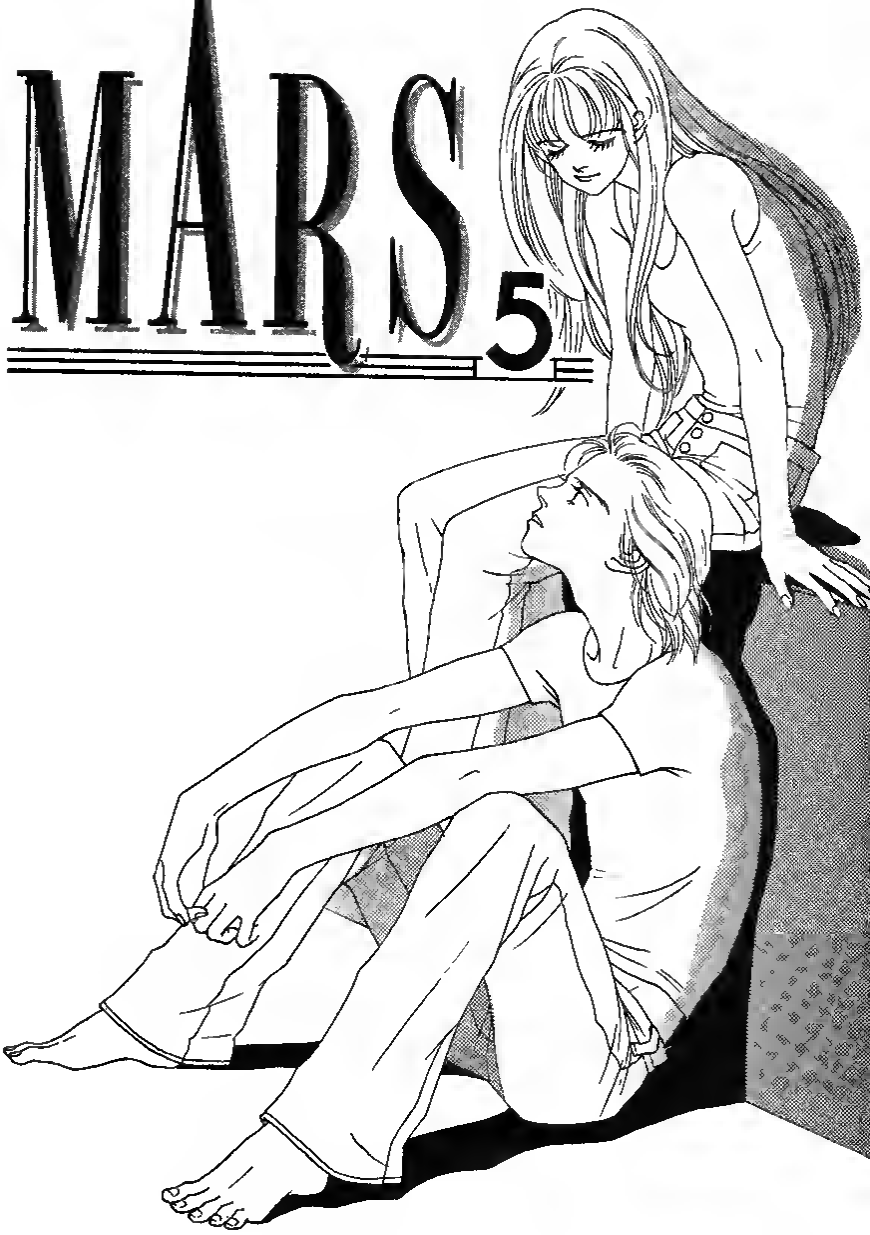
MARS

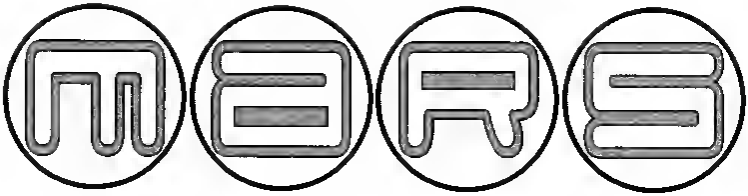
5

by Fuyumi Soryo

TOKYOPOP

MARS 5





Volume 5

By Fuyumi Soryo

TOKYOPOP®

LOS ANGELES • TOKYO

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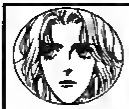
Manufactured in the USA

MARS

LEGEND OF MARS



Rei Kashino.
A high school student who races motorcycles and goes out with Kira. He thinks he's responsible for his brother's suicide.

Shiori Sakurazawa
Rei's girlfriend from junior high. She's still in love with Rei

Our story up to now...

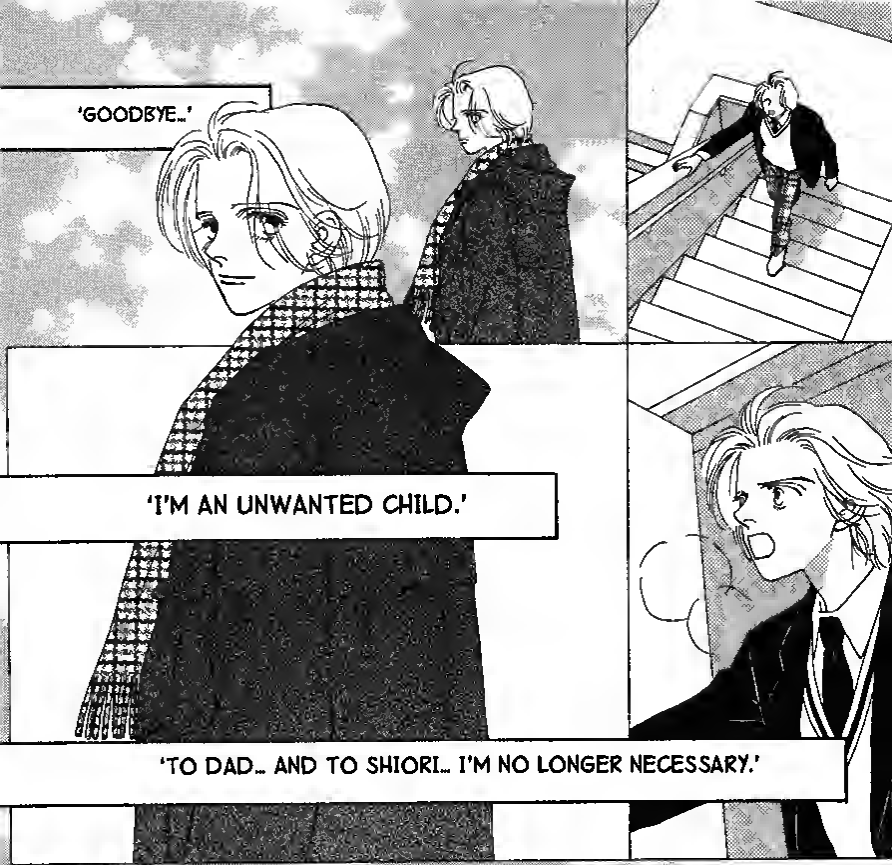
Kira is spellbound by Rei when she sees him kissing a statue of Mars in the art studio. Meanwhile, Rei finds himself drawn to Kira's sketch of a mother and child. Over time, the two grow closer. On their first date, Kira finds out Rei had a brother, Sei, who died recently. Then Kyoko tells Kira shocking details about Rei's past, including the fact that Sei committed suicide by jumping off a building night before Rei's eyes.

Then Rei's friends from junior high, Takemura and Shiori, show up. Takemura tells Kira that the reason Sei committed suicide was that Rei stole Sei's girlfriend, Shiori. Kira is concerned about Rei, but she's also worried that she's just a substitute for Sei. Meanwhile, Rei remembers that Sei killed himself because he found out their father wasn't their real father.

Kira Aso
Her painting of Rei won first place in a recent art show. Kira loves Rei, but her anxiety about his inner darkness is deepening.

Shuichi Takemura
Rei's friend from junior high. Shuichi was on the scene of Sei's suicide.

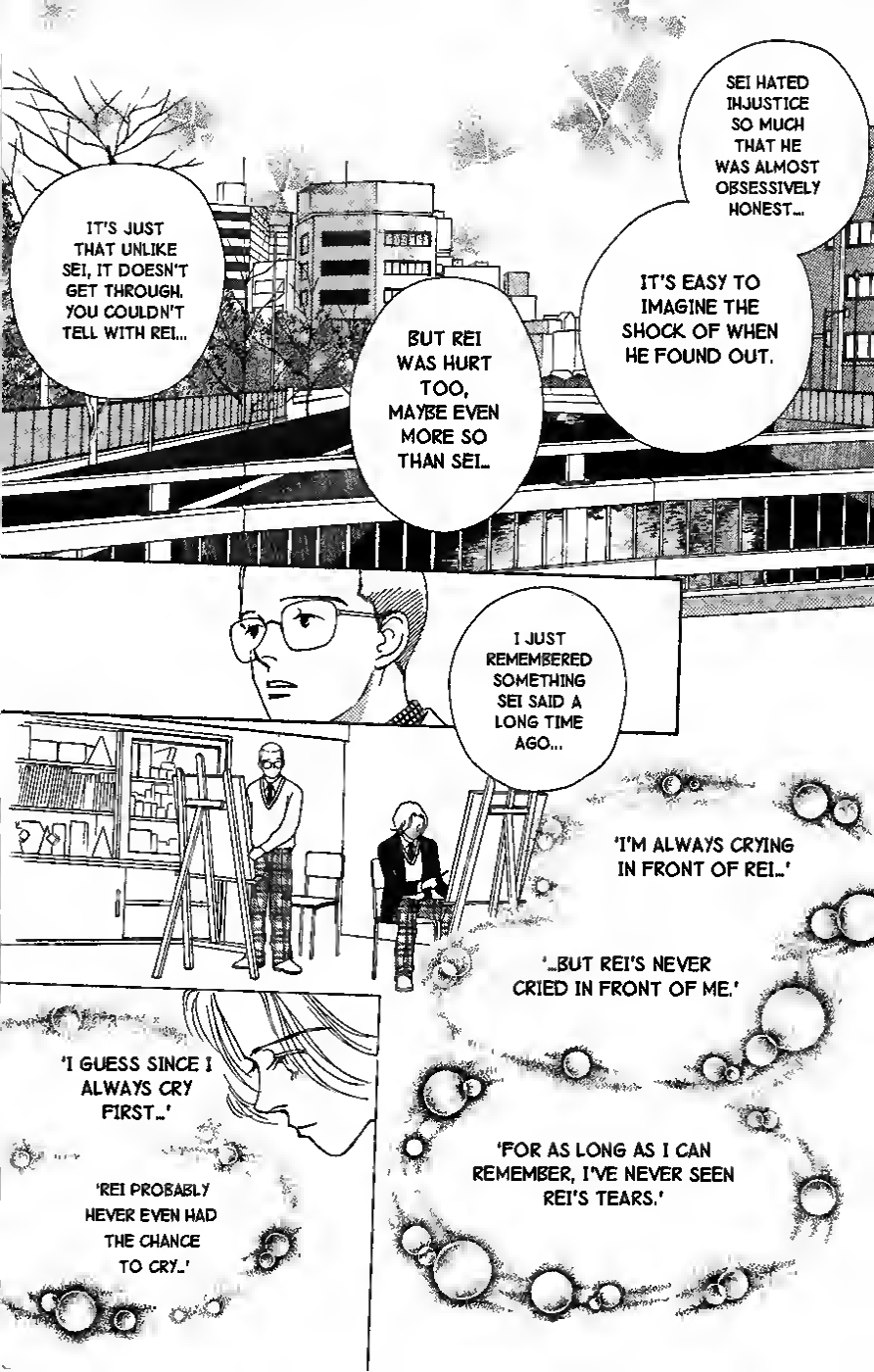
WE'RE NOT OUR FATHER'S REAL CHILDREN
WE'RE LOVE CHILDREN FROM AN AFFAIR OUR MOTHER HAD.
SEI COULDN'T FORGIVE THAT.
HE COULDN'T TAKE IT.
THAT'S WHY HE DIED.


'GOODBYE...'
'I'M AN UNWANTED CHILD.'
'TO DAD... AND TO SHIORI... I'M NO LONGER NECESSARY.'

GOODBYE.

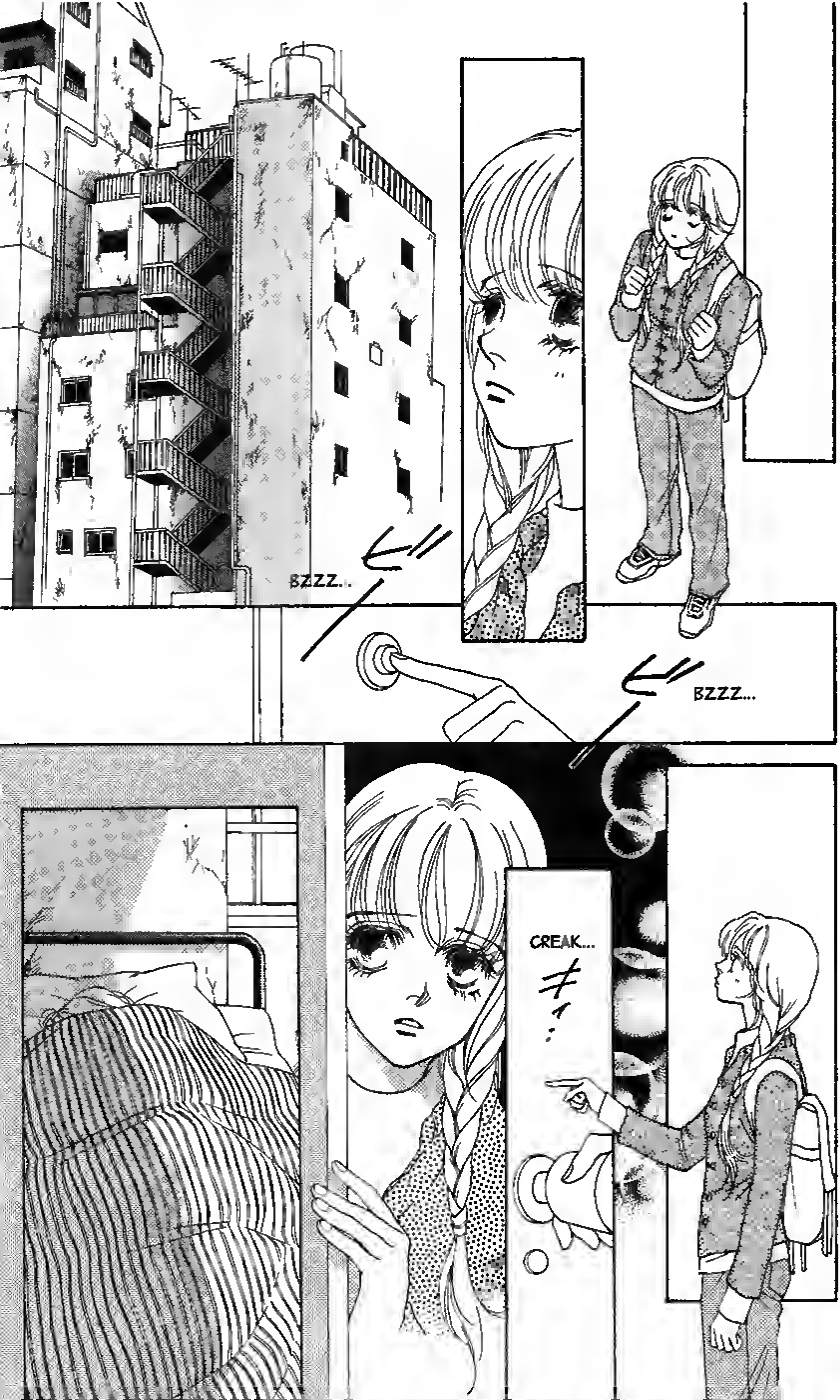
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? SHIORI?
I'LL TAKE SHIORI HOME.
YOU CAN GET HOME ALONE ON YOUR OWN, RIGHT?

I MAY HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN...
TO DRIVE REI TO SAY SOME-THING LIKE THAT...
JUST BECAUSE THEY WANTED THE REAL STORY.
YOU CAN'T BE SO DESPERATE ...
... FOR THE TRUTH.
REI LOOKED LIKE HE WAS HAVING A GOOD TIME AT YOUR SCHOOL FAIR.
IT HAD BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE SEEN REI SO HAPPY.
IT REMINDED ME OF WHEN SEI WAS STILL ALIVE.
I PROBABLY WASN'T SUPPOSED TO SEE HIM AGAIN.
IF I REALLY CARED ABOUT REI, I SHOULD'VE LET HIM BE.


SEI HATED INJUSTICE SO MUCH THAT HE WAS ALMOST OBSESSIVELY HONEST...
IT'S EASY TO IMAGINE THE SHOCK OF WHEN HE FOUND OUT.
BUT REI WAS HURT TOO, MAYBE EVEN MORE SO THAN SEI...
IT'S JUST THAT UNLIKE SEI, IT DOESN'T GET THROUGH. YOU COULDN'T TELL WITH REI...
I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING SEI SAID A LONG TIME AGO...
'I'M ALWAYS CRYING IN FRONT OF REI..'
'...BUT REI'S NEVER CRIED IN FRONT OF ME.'
'FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, I'VE NEVER SEEN REI'S TEARS.'
'I GUESS SINCE I ALWAYS CRY FIRST...'
'REI PROBABLY NEVER EVEN HAD THE CHANCE TO CRY..'

'BUT I REALIZED...'
'MAYBE IT'S NOT THAT REI DOESN'T CRY, BUT THAT HE CAN'T CRY.'
'I CAN CRY EASILY IN FRONT OF REI,'
'BUT REI...'

SO, KASHINO'S THE ONLY ONE ABSENT.
I WONDER WHAT HAP-PENED?
HE WAS COMING TO SCHOOL REGULARLY FOR A WHILE.


BZZZ..
BZZZ...
CREAK...
キィ...

REI?
WH..?! YOU SCARED ME. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
U..UM.
U..UM.
YOU DIDN'T COME TO SCHOOL, SO I WONDERED WHAT WAS WRONG...
YEAH.
I JUST FEEL SLUG-GISH, TIRED..
..AND MY HEAD HURTS.

REI, YOU'RE BURNING UP!!
WHAT?
OH...
COME TO THINK OF IT, EVERYTHING SEEMS A LITTLE FUZZY...
THAT'S NOT GOOD. THIS ISN'T FUNNY.
WHERE'S A THER-MOMETER? AND SOME COLD MEDICINE?
I DON'T HAVE ANY OF THAT CRAP.
DON'T WORRY...
I'LL BE FINE IF I SLEEP.
NO.
YOU MIGHT MAKE YOUR ILLNESS WORSE AND END UP IN REAL TROUBLE.
IS THERE A HOSPITAL AROUND HERE? YOU WANT ME TO CALL A DOCTOR?
STOP. I DON'T LIKE DOCTORS.
OH...
I CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOU LIKE THIS.
SOMEONE SHOULD BE HERE WITH YOU...

UM..
WHY DON'T YOU HAVE SHIORI COME OVER?
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
I'LL GET WORSE IF SHE COMES HERE.
SHIORI'S NOT THE TYPE WHO CAN LOOK AFTER SOMEONE ELSE.
BUT YOU CAN'T BE ALONE IN THIS STATE.
GASP
AT LEAST LET YOUR FAMILY--
YOUR FATHER KNOW..

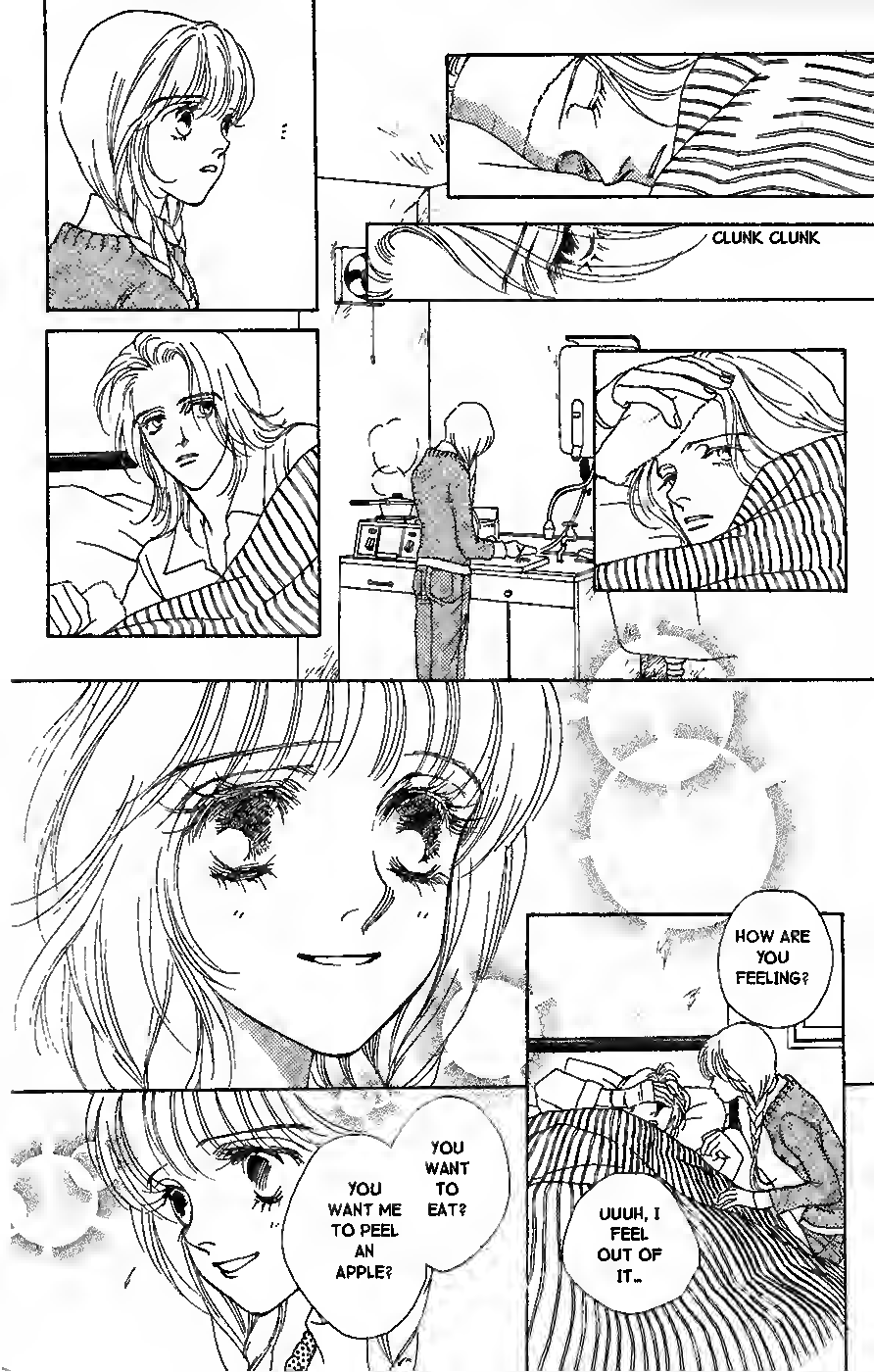
WE'RE NOT OUR FATHER'S REAL CHILDREN. OUR FATHER ISN'T OUR REAL FATHER AT ALL.
I'LL BE FINE...
BY MYSELF.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. GO HOME.
I'LL BE FINE.

IS IT OKAY IF I DON'T COME HOME TONIGHT?
HARUMI WANTS ME TO SLEEP OVER.
I'M SORRY I DIDN'T CALL YOU SOONER.
I'LL GET HOME AS EARLY AS I CAN TOMORROW.
BIP BIP BIP
UM...
LET ME USE YOUR PHONE.
RRRING
RRRING
OH...
MOM, IT'S ME.
BIP
I BETTER CALL HARUMI AND ASK HER TO PLAY ALONG.

LAWSON
I BOUGHT MEDICINE AND FOOD..
UM, WHAT ELSE?
OH! PAJAMAS!
'YOU GOT SICK BECAUSE YOU'RE SLEEPING IN TNAT.'
'I OON'T NAVE PAJAMAS.'
'WNY OON'T YOU WEAR PAJAMAS?'
WNERE CAN I FIND A CLOTNING STORE?
UM.. EXCUSE ME? IS TNERE A CLOTNING STORE AROUND NERE?
ON, I'M NOT FROM AROUNO HERE.

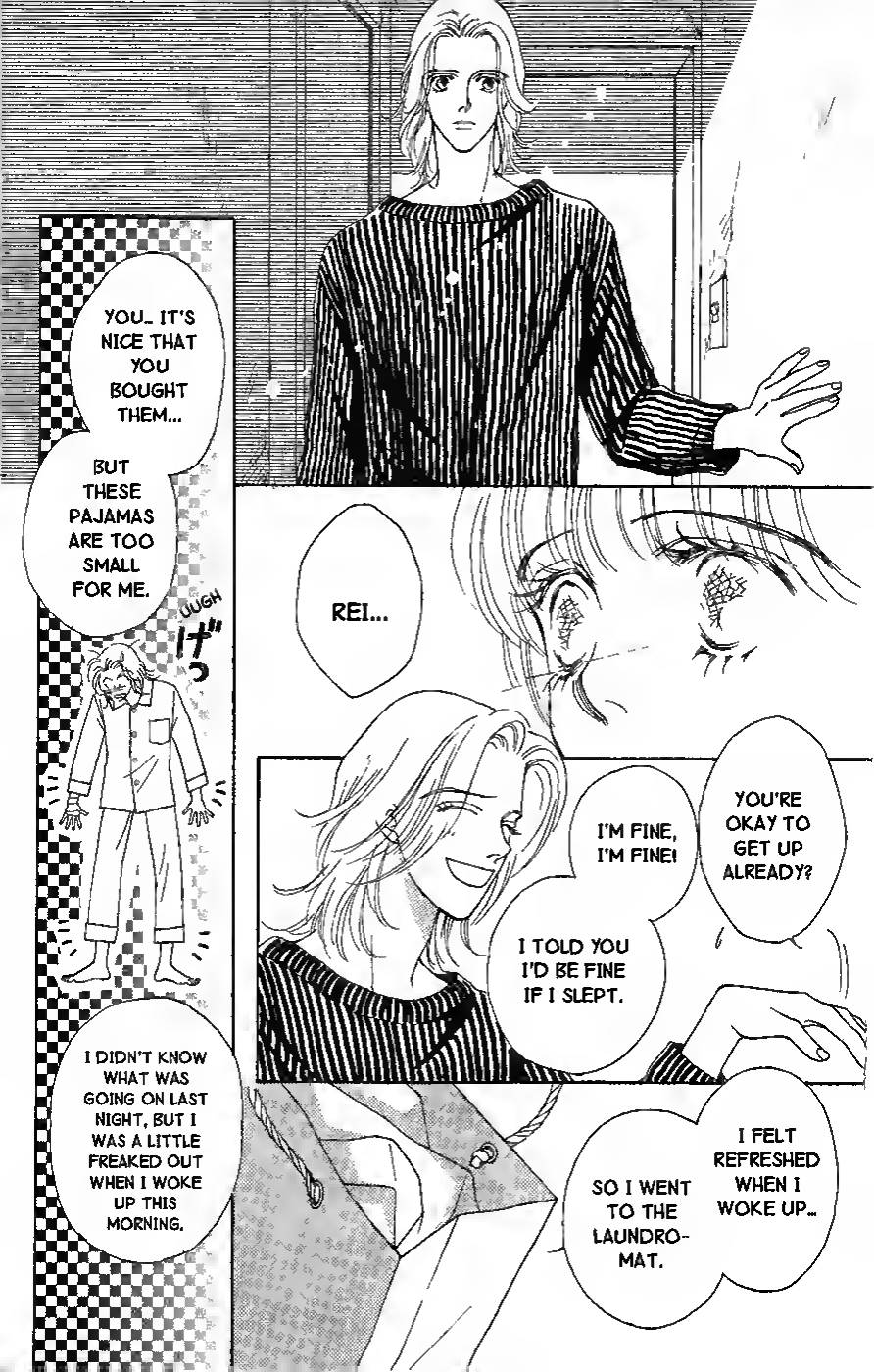
'WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? ALL THE STORES ARE GOING TO CLOSE SOON.'
AHH...
THUD
OW!
'I'LL BE FINE BY MYSELF...'

I KNOW THAT EVERYONE IS ALONE...
BUT I FEEL LIKE REI'S LONELINESS IS DIFFERENT FROM EVERYONE ELSE'S.
WHY DID YOU LEAVE REI HERE BY HIMSELF?
SEI, YOU'RE A WUSS, A WIMP...

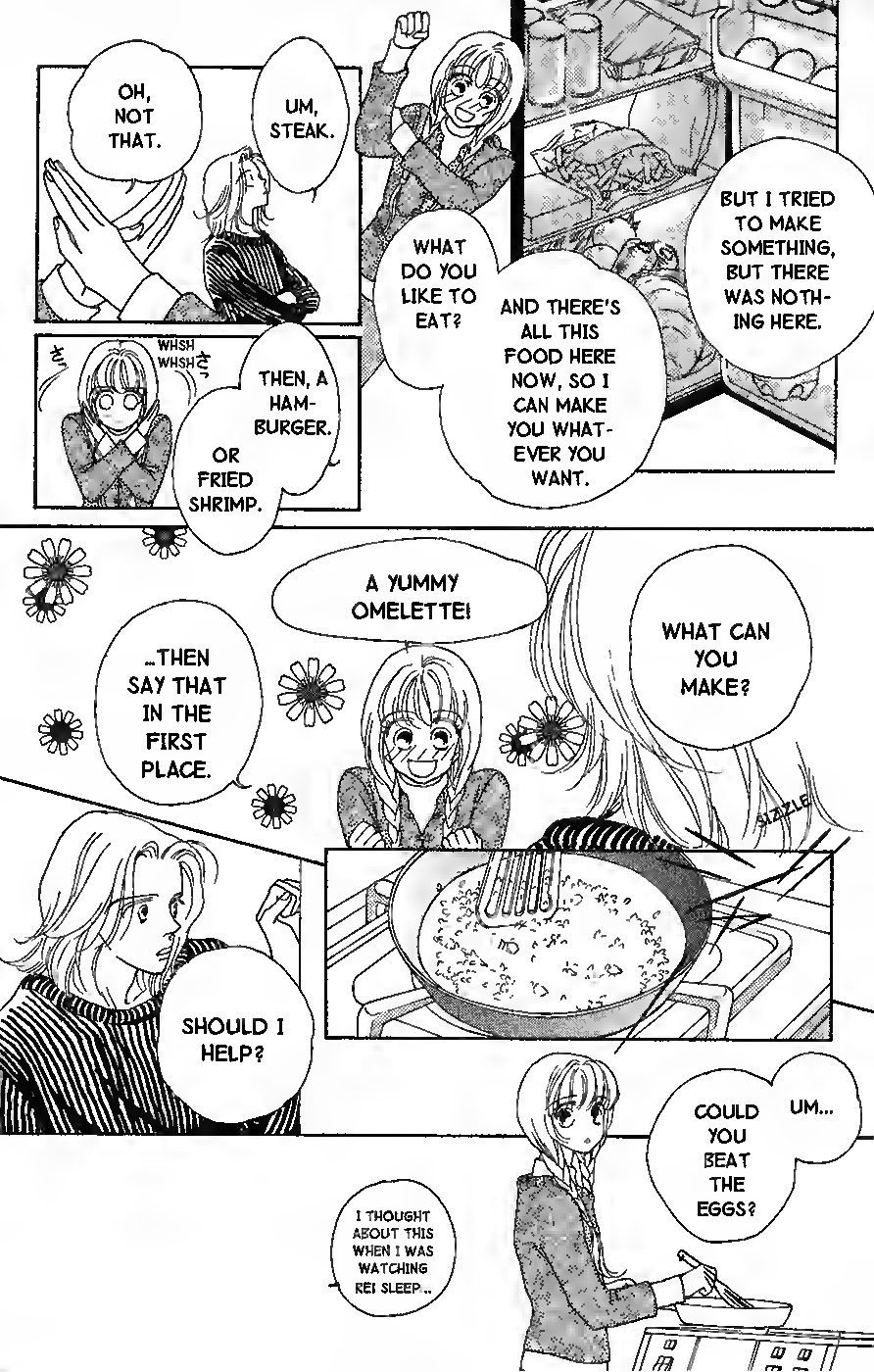

...
CLUNK CLUNK
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
UUUH, I FEEL OUT OF IT..
YOU WANT TO EAT?
YOU WANT ME TO PEEL AN APPLE?

NO...
I DON'T WANT ANYTHING.

!
BOOFF
CLIK


YOU... IT'S NICE THAT YOU BOUGHT THEM...
BUT THESE PAJAMAS ARE TOO SMALL FOR ME.
UUGH
ばっ
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON LAST NIGHT, BUT I WAS A LITTLE FREAKED OUT WHEN I WOKE UP THIS MORNING.
REI...
I'M FINE, I'M FINE! I TOLD YOU I'D BE FINE IF I SLEPT.
YOU'RE OKAY TO GET UP ALREADY?
SO I WENT TO THE LAUNDRO-MAT.
I FELT REFRESHED WHEN I WOKE UP...

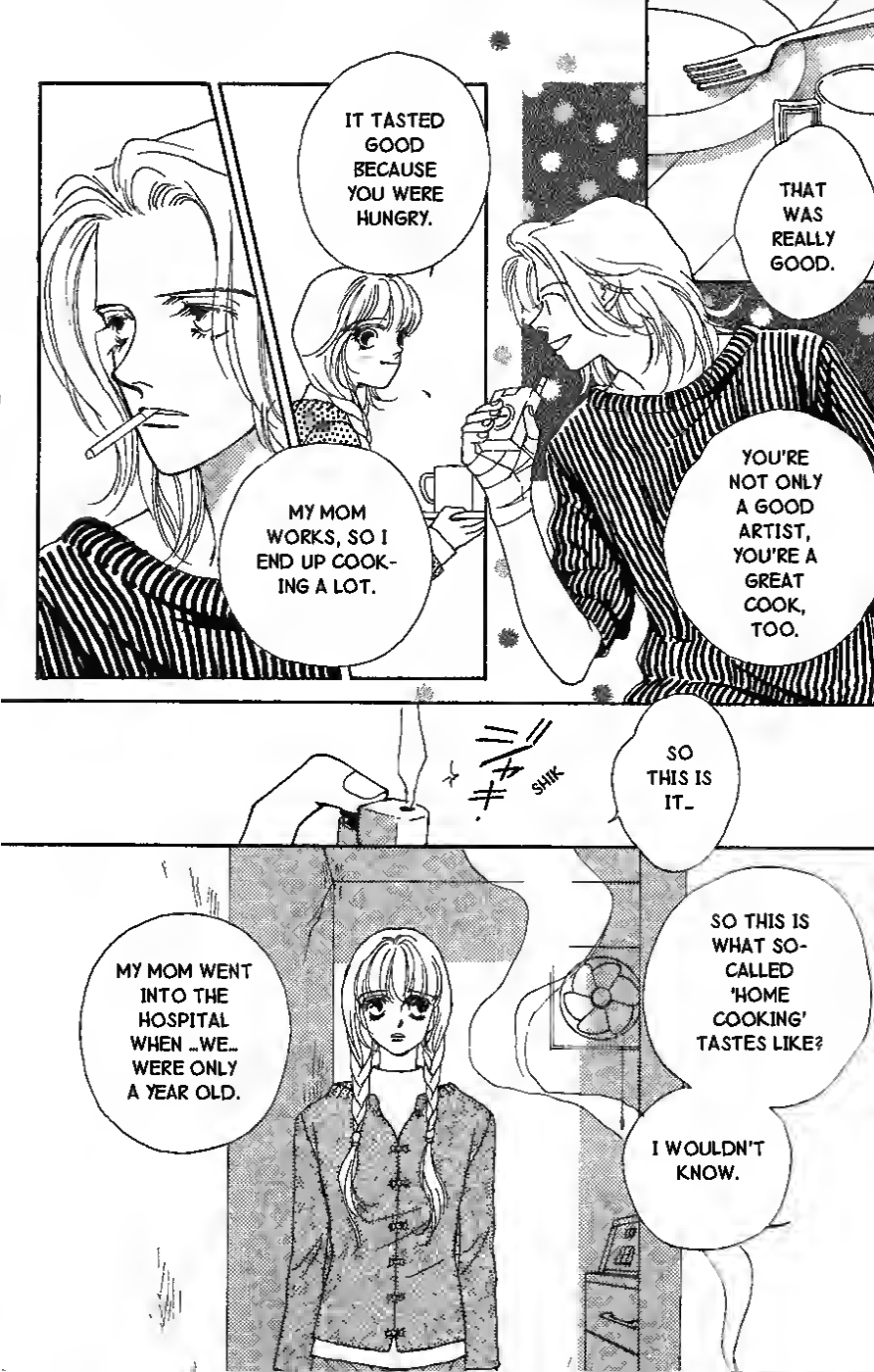
ARE YOU REALLY, REALLY OKAY?
I'M FINE. IT WAS PROBABLY JUST A COLD,
FROM WHEN WE RAN AROUND IN THE RAIN THE OTHER DAY.
BY THE WAY...
THEN YOU'RE THE ONE WHO PUT ME IN BED...
OH...
YEAH, I THOUGHT YOU WOULD FALL OVER THE WAY YOU WERE.
OH, I'LL TELL YOU NOW THAT NOTHING ELSE HAPPENED.
EVEN I'M NOT THAT ROUGH.
WHAT ARE THESE POTS AND PANS?
WHO ASKED YOU TO BUY KITCHENWARE?
THANKS TO YOU, MY WALLET'S EMPTY. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO LIVE ON AFTER TOMORROW?
UM...


OH, NOT THAT.
UM, STEAK.
WHSH WHSH
THEN, A HAM-BURGER.
OR FRIED SHRIMP.
WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO EAT?
AND THERE'S ALL THIS FOOD HERE NOW, SO I CAN MAKE YOU WHAT-EVER YOU WANT.
BUT I TRIED TO MAKE SOMETHING, BUT THERE WAS NOTH-ING HERE.
A YUMMY OMELETTE!
WHAT CAN YOU MAKE?
...THEN SAY THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
SIZZLE
SHOULD I HELP?
UM...
COULD YOU BEAT THE EGGS?
I THOUGHT ABOUT THIS WHEN I WAS WATCHING REI SLEEP...

WHAT CAN I DO?
OOH, RED HOT DOGS!
ALL I CAN DO..
IS TO HOPE THAT REI CAN KEEP SMILING..
OH, THAT.
I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH MONEY AND WAS ONLY ABLE TO BUY THE RED ONES
HEY, MAKE ME OCTOPUS DOGS!

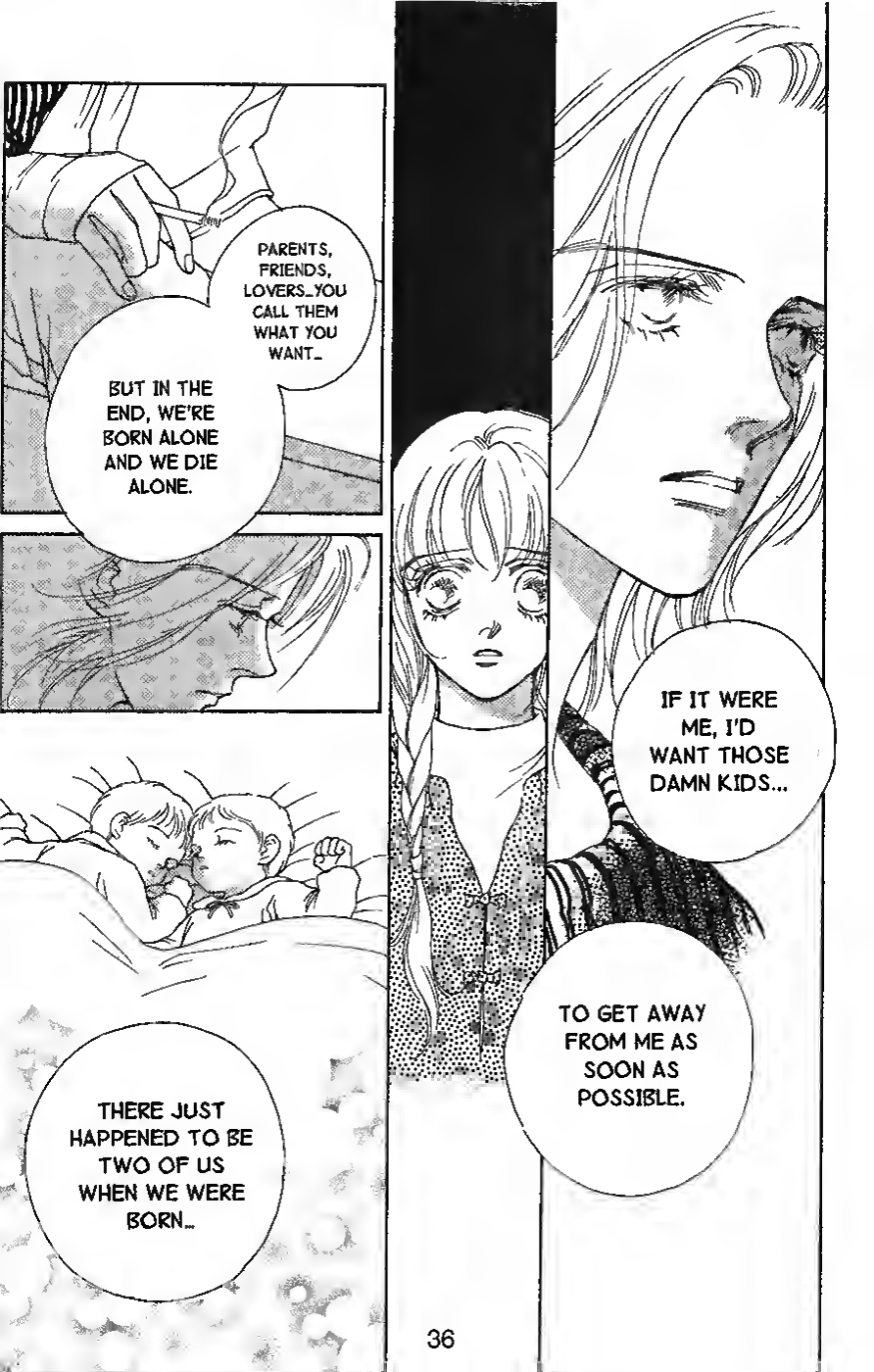
I TRIED MAKING A CRAB, SEE?
OOOH.
おお…
WOW, IT'S THE REAL THING.
I'VE ONLY SEEN OCTOPUS DOGS IN PICTURES.
IF I CAN, I WANT TO WATCH HIS SMILING FACE FOREVER.

I CAN PUT UP WITH ANYTHING IN ORDER TO DO THAT.
NO MATTER WHO REI LOVES...
OR EVEN IF I'M A SUBSTITUTE FOR SEI...
I FEEL LIKE NONE OF THAT MATTERS ANYMORE...


THAT WAS REALLY GOOD.
YOU'RE NOT ONLY A GOOD ARTIST, YOU'RE A GREAT COOK, TOO.
IT TASTED GOOD BECAUSE YOU WERE HUNGRY.
MY MOM WORKS, SO I END UP COOKING A LOT.
SHIK
SO THIS IS IT..
SO THIS IS WHAT SO-CALLED 'HOME COOKING' TASTES LIKE?
I WOULDN'T KNOW.
MY MOM WENT INTO THE HOSPITAL WHEN ...WE... WERE ONLY A YEAR OLD.

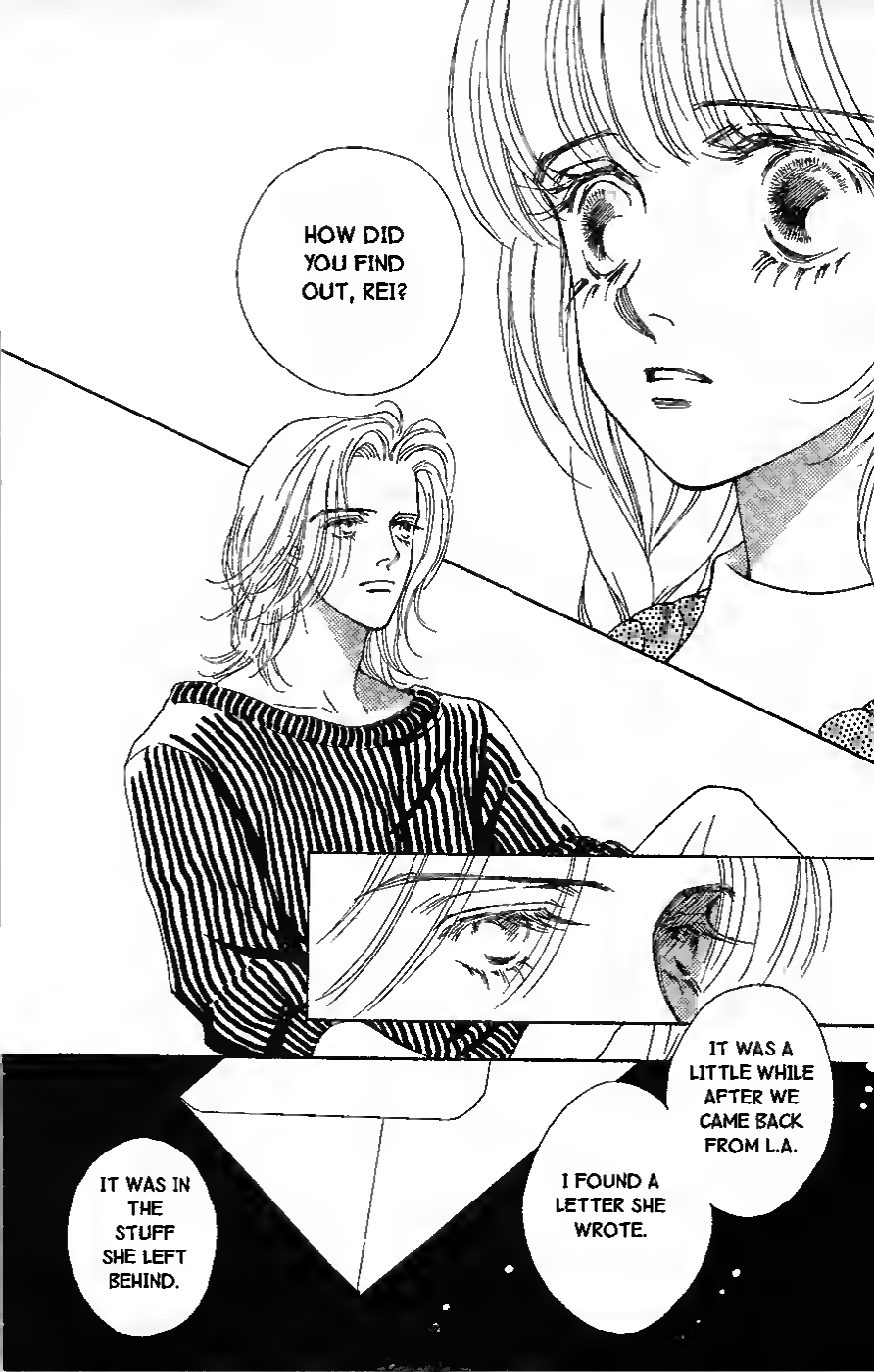
WHO KNOWS IF WE WOULD'VE HAD HOME-COOKED FOOD EVEN IF SHE WAS ALIVE?
EVEN IF SHE HADN'T, I DON'T THINK SHE WAS THE STAY-AT-HOME TYPE OF WOMAN.
YOU DEFINITELY CAN'T LIVE WITH YOUR FATHER?
REI, ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP LIVING ALONE?
!

IF YOU GET MARRIED ONE DAY...
AND YOUR WIFE DIES...
AND YOU END UP HAVING TO BE FACE-TO-FACE WITH YOUR KIDS EVERY DAY...
AND YOU SEND YOUR KIDS OFF TO L.A. BECAUSE YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT...
AND YOUR KIDS KEEP GROWING DAY BY DAY...
TO LOOK NOTHING LIKE YOU...
AND YOU DON'T GET A DIVORCE JUST TO KEEP UP APPEAR-ANCES...
AND YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE THEM THERE...
SO YOU RELUC-TANTLY BRING THEM BACK TO JAPAN AND PRE-TEND YOU'RE A FAMILY.


PARENTS, FRIENDS, LOVERS..YOU CALL THEM WHAT YOU WANT..
BUT IN THE END, WE'RE BORN ALONE AND WE DIE ALONE.
IF IT WERE ME, I'D WANT THOSE DAMN KIDS...
TO GET AWAY FROM ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
THERE JUST HAPPENED TO BE TWO OF US WHEN WE WERE BORN..

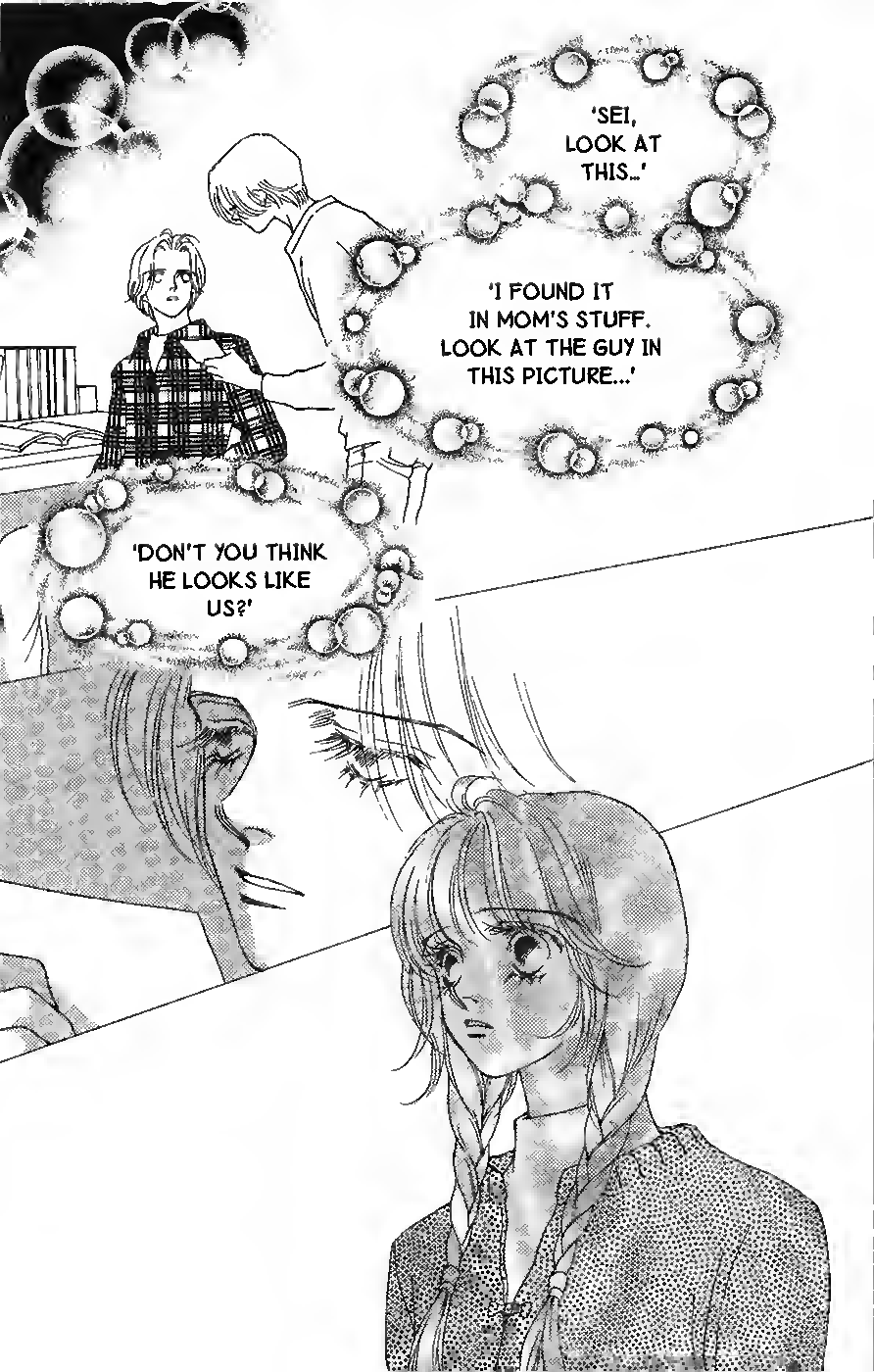
I WONDER...
IF THAT'S WHY SEI WENT AWAY.
BUT NO MATTER WHY HE DID IT, THERE'S NO REASON FOR ANYONE TO KILL HIMSELF.
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A PERSON WHO HAS TO GO AWAY.
SEI WOULDN'T HAVE KILLED HIMSELF IF HE DIDN'T KNOW THE TRUTH.

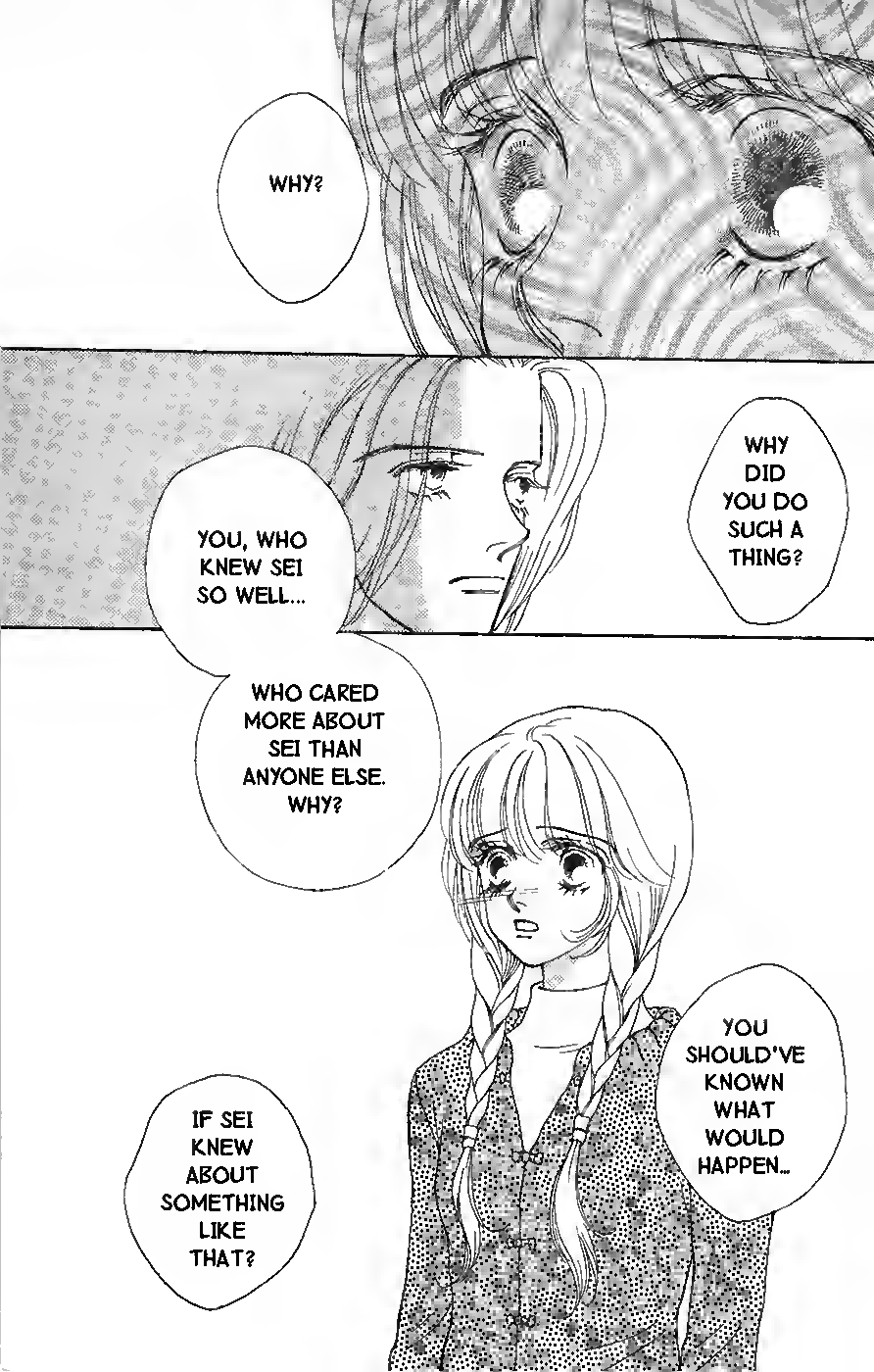
HOW DID SEI...
HOW DID SEI FIND OUT...
THAT HE WASN'T HIS FATHER'S REAL SON? HOW?
HE NEVER WOULD HAVE KNOWN IF SOMEONE HADN'T TOLD HIM...
SO THEN WHO...

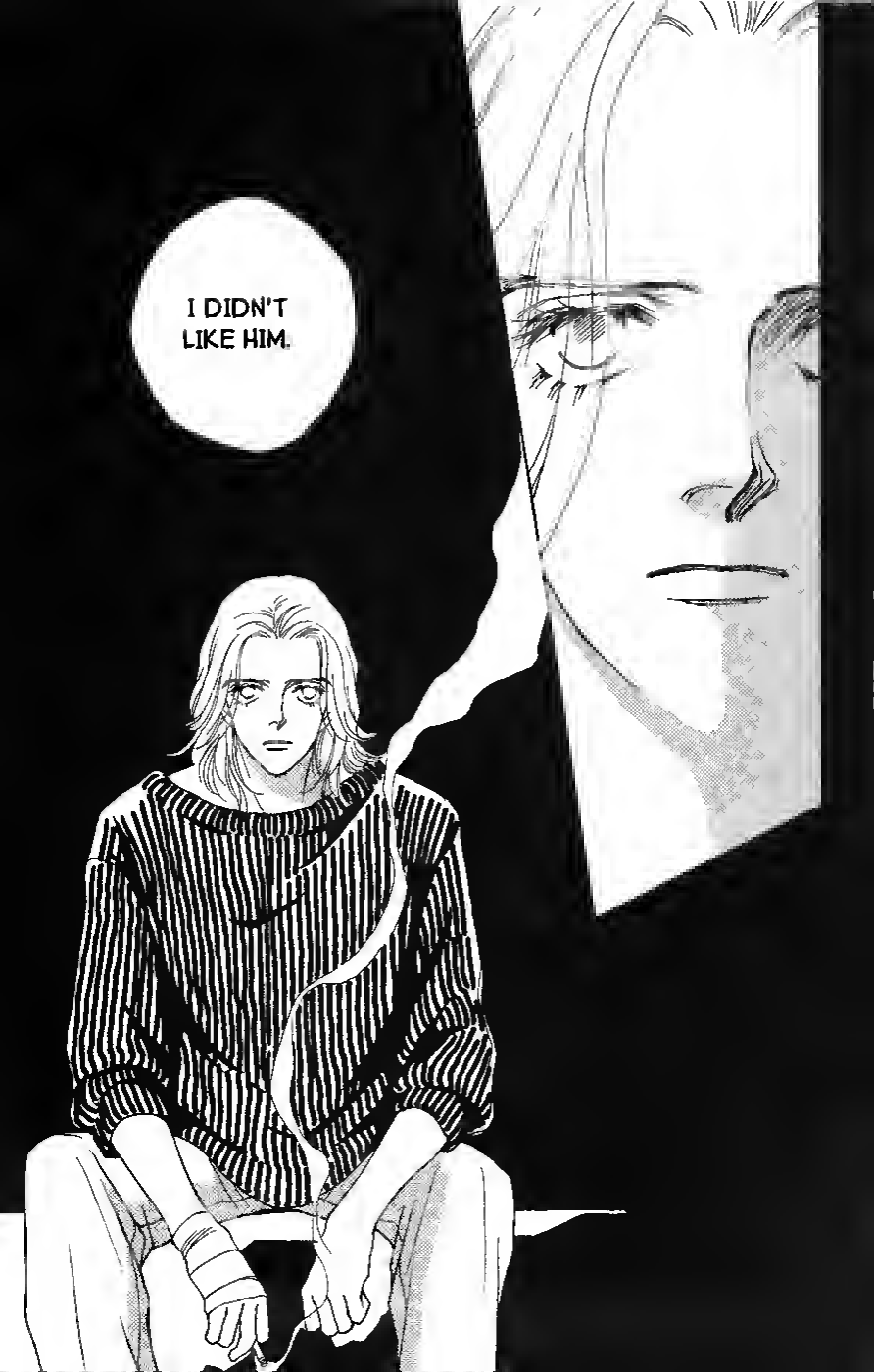

HOW DID YOU FIND OUT, REI?
IT WAS A LITTLE WHILE AFTER WE CAME BACK FROM L.A.
I FOUND A LETTER SHE WROTE.
IT WAS IN THE STUFF SHE LEFT BEHIND.

IT WAS SUCH A PASSIONATE LOVE LETTER THAT IT WAS EMBARRASSING.
I GUESS SHE MEANT TO GIVE IT TO HIM AND DIDN'T GET A CHANCE.
THERE WAS A PHOTO INSIDE.
A MAN WHO LOOKED A LOT LIKE ME.

I TOLD HIM.
SEI...


'SEI, LOOK AT THIS...'
'I FOUND IT IN MOM'S STUFF. LOOK AT THE GUY IN THIS PICTURE...'
'DON'T YOU THINK HE LOOKS LIKE US?'


WHY?
WHY DID YOU DO SUCH A THING?
YOU, WHO KNEW SEI SO WELL...
WHO CARED MORE ABOUT SEI THAN ANYONE ELSE. WHY?
YOU SHOULD'VE KNOWN WHAT WOULD HAPPEN...
IF SEI KNEW ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THAT?


I DIDN'T
LIKE HIM.

WITH HIS HIGH-MINDED IDEAS AND HIS 'JUSTICE'...
...THEN CRYING ALL THE TIME. I'VE HATED HIM FOR THAT SINCE I WAS LITTLE.
JUST LIKE MY OLD MAN WISHED WE WOULD GO AWAY...

I WISHED THAT HE WOULD GO AWAY.

YOU'RE LYING..
ABOUT HATING SEI.
YOU SAID THAT YOU WEREN'T LONELY BECAUSE YOU HAD SEI..
..AND YOU WERE ALWAYS TOGETH-ER...

HE WAS ALL THAT I HAD.
MY MOTHER DIED, AND MY OLD MAN CUT HIS TIES WITH US.
HE WAS ALL I HAD, SO I TRIED TO PROTECT HIM..
AND HE RELIED ON ME.
OUR PRIORITY WAS OUR COEXISTENCE, WHETHER WE LIKED EACH OTHER OR NOT.
BUT WE WERE DOING PRETTY WELL IN L.A.
WE FOUGHT, BUT IT WAS ALWAYS ABOUT PETTY STUFF.
WHEN WE CAME TO JAPAN TO LIVE WITH OUR OLD MAN, WE BECAME OUT-OF-SYNC.. NEVER SAW EYE-TO-EYE.

HE WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO PLEASE OUR OLD MAN...
AND I WAS ALWAYS BUTTING HEADS WITH HIM.
WHY!?
WHY DO I HAVE TO STOP RIDING?
YOU STILL HAVEN'T LEARNED YOUR LESSON AFTER GETTING SO BADLY INJURED?
MOTORCYCLE RACING... IS TOO DANGEROUS TO BE A PLAY ACTIVITY.
I'M NOT PLAYING! I'M SERIOUS.
!
I'M SERIOUS ABOUT WANTING TO RACE.
THAT'S WHY I'M NOT GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL.
AFTER JUNIOR HIGH I'M GOING BACK TO L.A. AND DOING SOME DIRT BIKING...
THAT'S ENOUGH.
WHY DON'T YOU TRY THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?
I AM THINKING ABOUT IT. THAT'S WHY...

IT'S MY FUTURE.
NOT YOUR FUTURE!
REI...
IS MAKING NOISE AND BLEEDING EVERY-WHERE ..
YOUR IDEA OF A FUTURE?
THE FUTURE, THE FUTURE!
YOU'VE SAID TOO MUCH YOU SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO DAD.
YOU'RE NOT A CHILD ANYMORE. IT'S NOT LIKE WHEN WE WERE LIVING IN L.A.
I AGREE WITH DAD.
YOU SHOULD BE MORE REALISTIC.

WELL, MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
WAIT, ... REI.
WHAT ARE YOU SO MAD ABOUT?
WHAT HAPPENS TO ME HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU.
DAD AND I ARE JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
IF YOU WANT TO PLAY HOUSE WITH DAD, GO AHEAD.
BUT LEAVE ME OUT OF IT.
WHY WOULD YOU SAY SUCH A THING?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN... PLAYING HOUSE?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? WHY DO YOU ALWAYS REBEL WHEN IT COMES TO DAD?

WHAT...? I'M NOT KISSING UP TO HIM.
YES, YOU ARE, EVERY DAY...
ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS TRY TO PLEASE HIM.
JUST LOOKING AT YOUR BLANK HONOR-STUDENT FACE PISSES ME OFF.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
HYSTERIC
YOU LAP UP WHAT HE SAYS LIKE A LITTLE DOG.
AND WITH YOUR VOICE AND FACE THE SAME AS MINE, I GET CHILLS EVERY TIME YOU KISS UP TO DAD

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU.
EVER SINCE WE CAME BACK TO JAPAN...
EVER SINCE WE CAME TO LIVE IN THIS HOUSE, YOU'VE BEEN IRRITABLE.
YOU REBEL AGAINST DAD ABOUT EVERY LITTLE THING
THANKS TO YOU, THERE'S ALWAYS TENSION IN THE HOUSE, AND I...
I CAN'T STAND THAT...
I TRY TO GET ALONG...
WE'RE FINALLY ABLE TO ALL LIVE TOGETHER.
WE SHOULD AT LEAST TRY TO MAKE UP FOR THE TIME THAT WE WERE APART.
BUT YOU'RE ALWAYS RUINING IT.

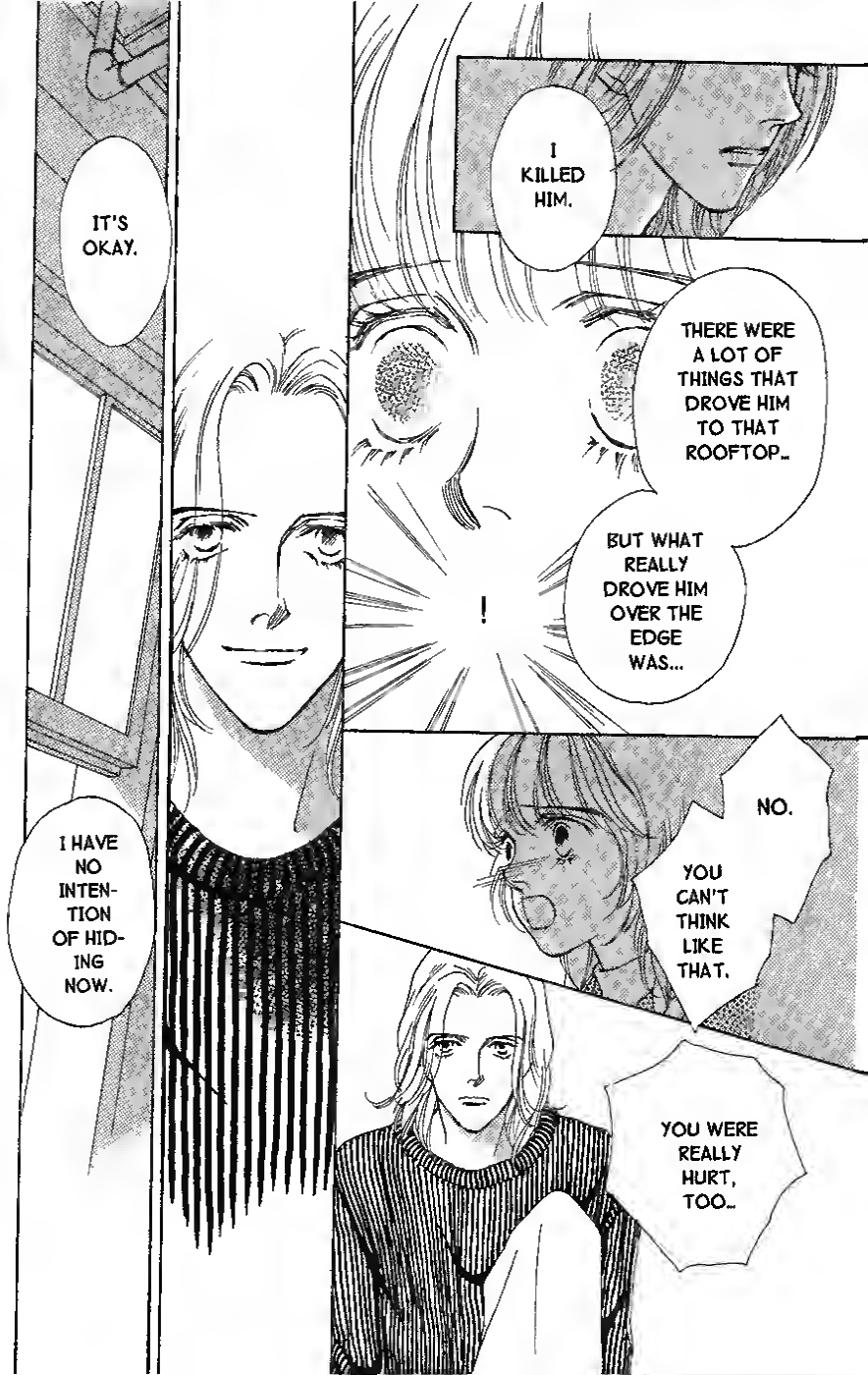
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS...
BUT YOU'RE ALWAYS LOSING YOUR TEMPER AND SULKING.
YOU'RE THE ONE ALWAYS RUINING THE HARMONY OF THIS HOUSE.
SLAAAP
THUNK

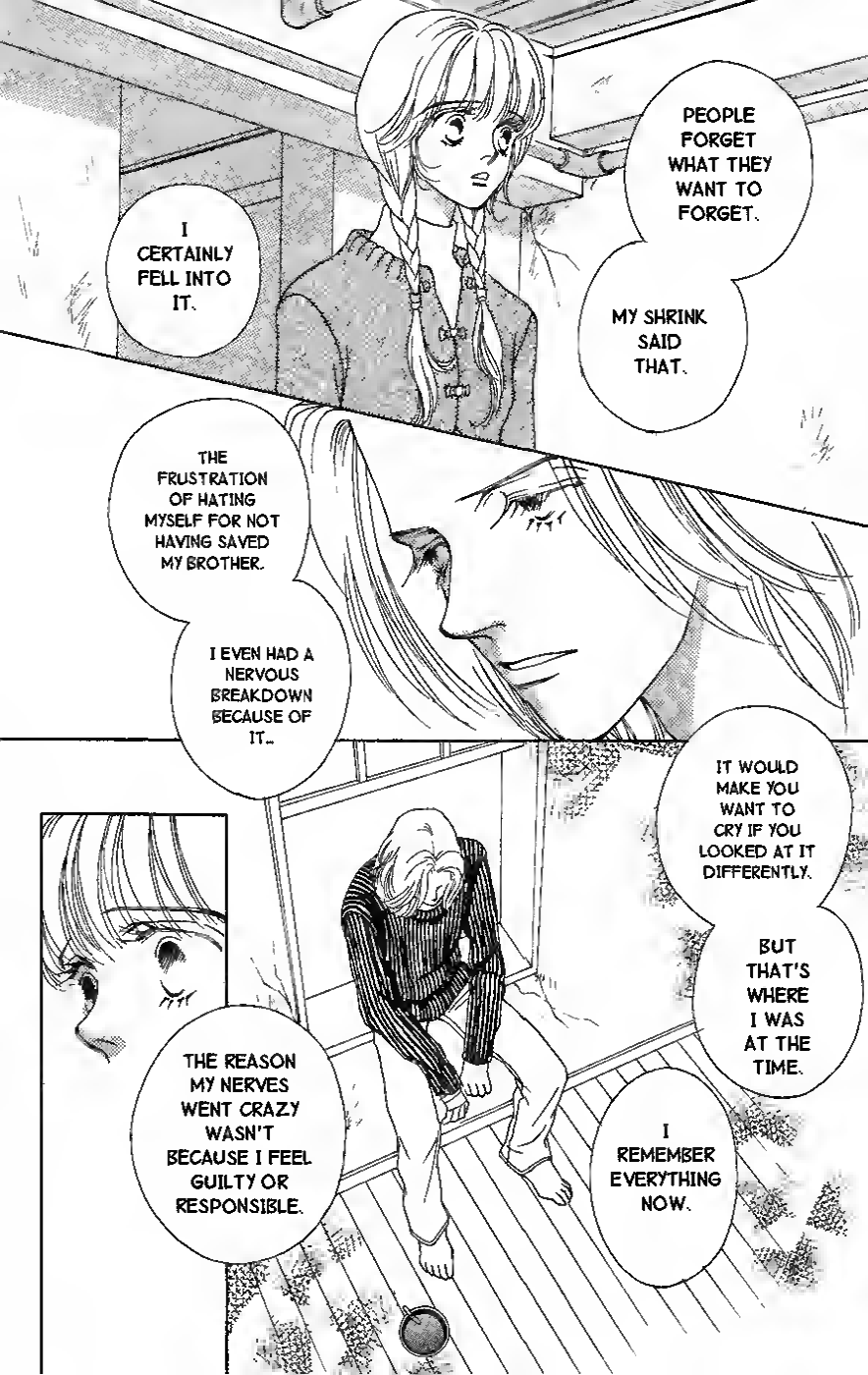
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE TALK-ING TO..
SO HIGH AND MIGHTY..
THE ONLY THING YOU'RE GOOD FOR IS CRYING.
YOU COULDN'T DO ANY-THING FOR YOURSELF IF I WASN'T HERE.
IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME
IN THE END, IT'S JUST STRENGTH
YEAH, YOU'RE STRONG, BUT ALL YOU DO IS TWIST PEOPLE'S ARMS.

I'M NOT HAPPY AT ALL BEING PROTECTED BY SOMEONE LIKE YOU.
THAT'S NOT STRENGTH. IT'S...
IT'S JUST VIOLENCE.
I LIKE YOU AND CARE ABOUT YOU. BUT...
I HATE THE FACT THAT YOU TRY TO RESOLVE EVERYTHING WITH FORCE.

WE NEVER FOUND EACH OTHER'S PRESENCE TO BE AS BOTHERSOME AS THAT DAY.
BACK WHEN WE WERE KIDS, WE USED TO GET ANXIOUS WHEN WE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE THE OTHER ONE WAS.
BUT THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE EVER REALLY FOUGHT...
HE WAS JUST GIVING ME BACK WHAT I GAVE HIM...

'WE GREW UP WITH EACH OTHER'S PRESENCE...'


I KILLED HIM.
THERE WERE A LOT OF THINGS THAT DROVE HIM TO THAT ROOFTOP...
BUT WHAT REALLY DROVE HIM OVER THE EDGE WAS...
!
IT'S OKAY.
I HAVE NO INTEN-TION OF HID-ING NOW.
NO.
YOU CAN'T THINK LIKE THAT.
YOU WERE REALLY HURT, TOO...


PEOPLE FORGET WHAT THEY WANT TO FORGET.
MY SHRINK SAID THAT.
I CERTAINLY FELL INTO IT.
THE FRUSTRATION OF HATING MYSELF FOR NOT HAVING SAVED MY BROTHER.
I EVEN HAD A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN BECAUSE OF IT..
IT WOULD MAKE YOU WANT TO CRY IF YOU LOOKED AT IT DIFFERENTLY.
BUT THAT'S WHERE I WAS AT THE TIME.
I REMEMBER EVERYTHING NOW.
THE REASON MY NERVES WENT CRAZY WASN'T BECAUSE I FEEL GUILTY OR RESPONSIBLE.

I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT..
AND I WANTED TO SOMEHOW JUSTIFY MYSELF..
IT'S BECAUSE I ENDED UP REALIZING HOW WARPED I WAS..
WARPED?
I ALWAYS KNEW IT..
THERE'S A PART OF ME THAT'S BRUTAL AND MERCILESS.
BUT WHEN I WAS WITH SEI, THAT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.
HE WAS SO HOPELESSLY INNOCENT AND GENTLE.

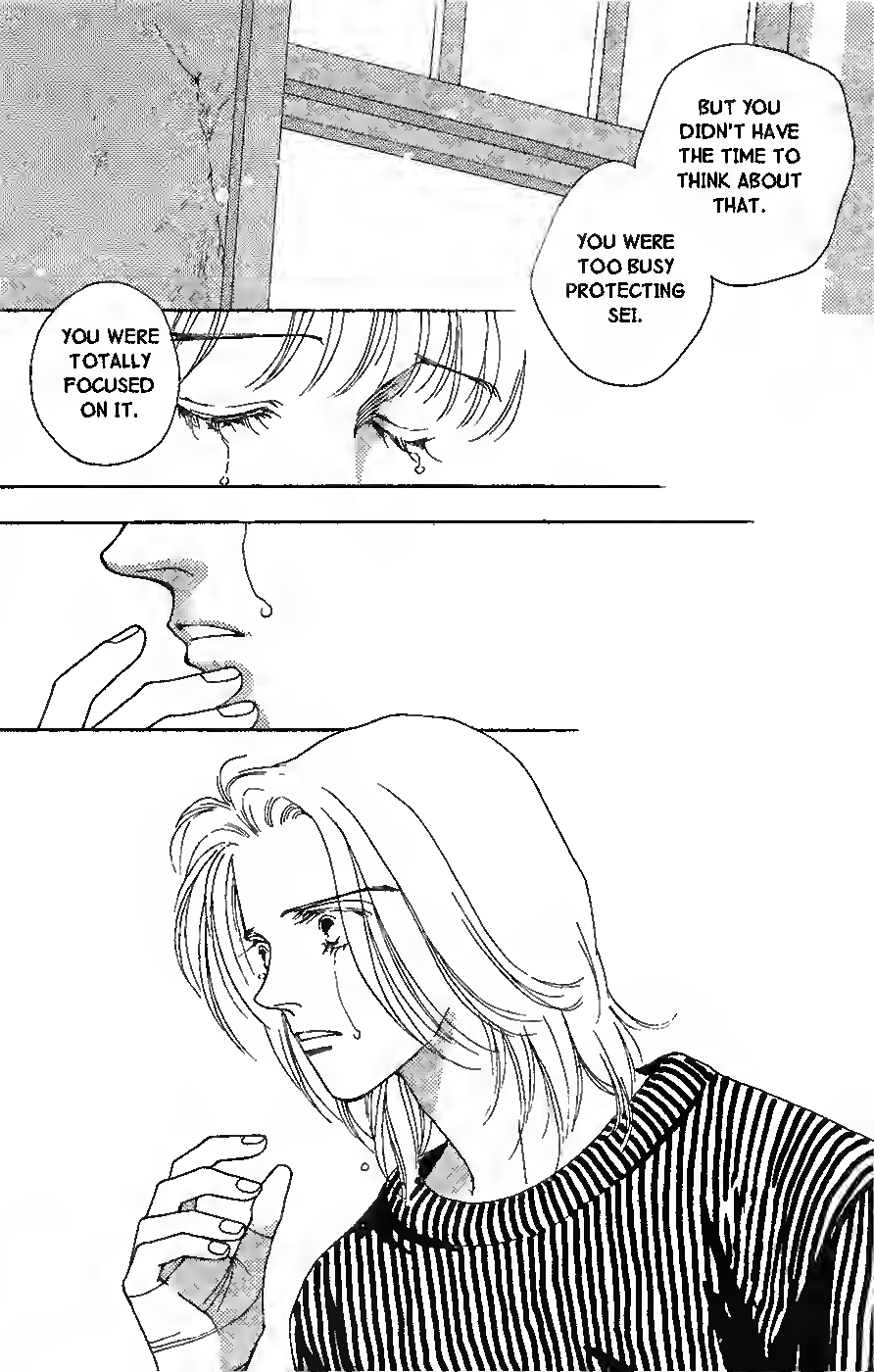
BEING WITH HIM, HE WAS ALWAYS THE RIGHT ONE.
I WAS JUST A WARPED HUMAN BEING...
I'D GET IRRITATED EVERY TIME HE WAS RIGHT.
...AND ANNOYED EVERY TIME HE CRIED.
EVERY TIME HE KISSED UP TO MY OLD MAN, WITH THE SAME FACE AS ME, I FELT LIKE GAGGING.
THAT'S WHY..

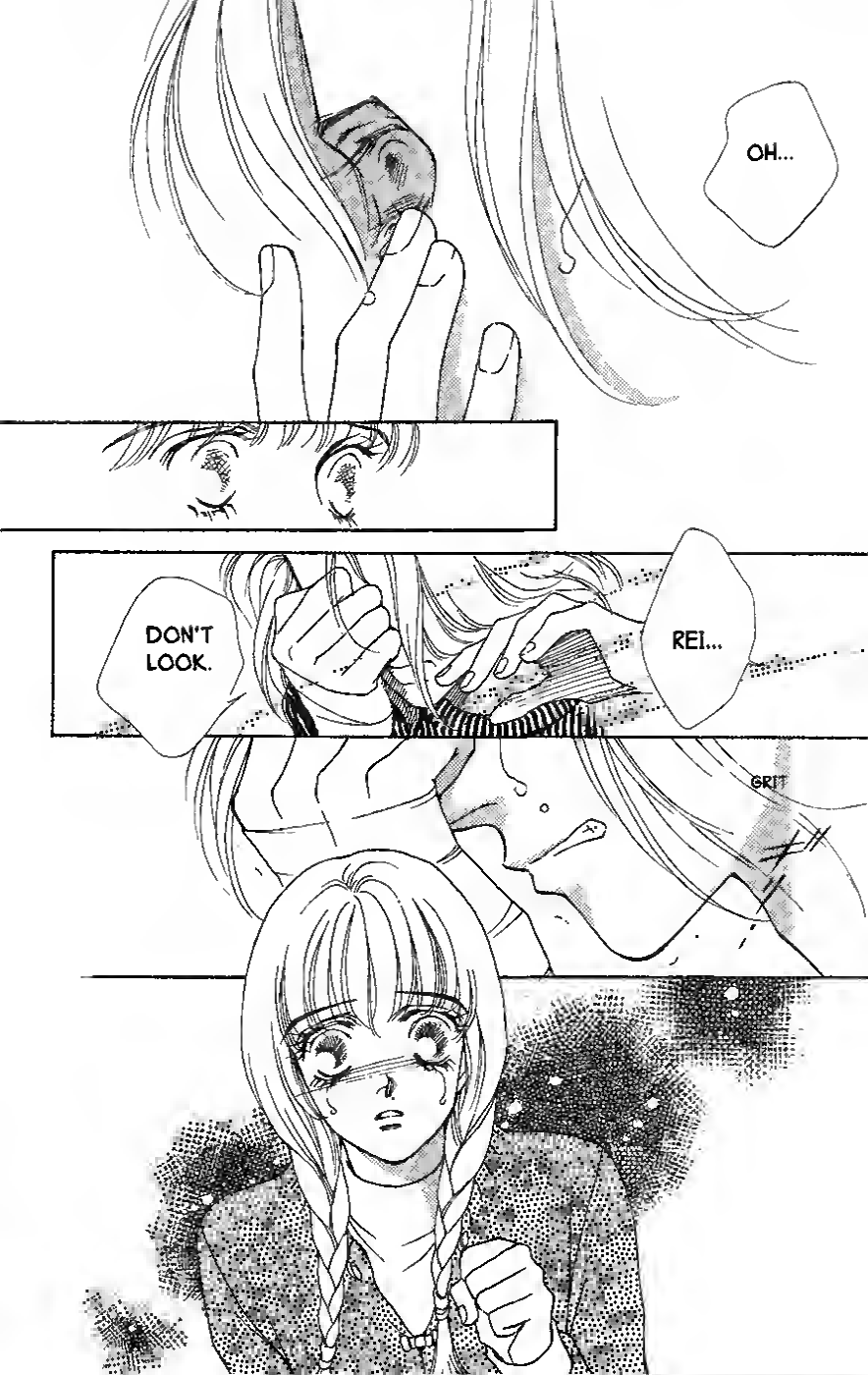
ALL I WAS DOING WAS TRYING TO PROTECT HIM.
BUT HE ALWAYS LOOKED AT ME LIKE HE WAS SCOLDING ME...
YOU SHOWED HIM YOUR MOTHER'S LETTER?
DID YOU REALLY HATE SEI THAT MUCH?
REALLY?
I KNEW HIM BETTER THAN ANY-ONE...
AND I WAS HIS ONLY FAMILY.
BECAUSE HE WOULD LOOK AT ME THE SAME WAY MY OLD MAN DID

'SEI'S YOUR ONLY FAMILY...
SO MAKE SURE YOU PROTECT HIM.'
WHAT HE WAS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR WAS MY MOTHER'S KINDNESS.
I PROTECTED HIM JUST LIKE MY MOTHER TOLD ME TO.
BUT HE...
BUT I COULDN'T EVER DO THAT FOR HIM.
BECAUSE...
REI...?

I DON'T KNOW HOW..
HOW TO PROTECT A KID LIKE A MOTHER DOES..
I'M NOT A MOTHER...
OR A FATHER.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROTECT ANYONE.

YOU NEEDED TO BE SUPPORTED EVEN MORE THAN SEI.
YOU WANTED SOMEONE TO PROTECT YOU, TOO.


BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME TO THINK ABOUT THAT.
YOU WERE TOO BUSY PROTECTING SEI.
YOU WERE TOTALLY FOCUSED ON IT.


OH...
DON'T LOOK.
REI...
GRIT

IT'S OKAY TO CRY.
THERE'S NO REASON TO HOLD BACK.
IT'S TOTALLY NATURAL.
RIGHT?
IT'S TOO LATE.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH I CRY...
NOTHING WILL CHANGE.
I CAN'T CHANGE ANY-THING...
SEI WON'T COME BACK.
NOT EVEN HIS VOICE.
NO ONE WILL FORGIVE ME.

IT'S OKAY.
NO ONE'S PERFECT.
NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BLAME YOU...
'WHEN DOES REI LET HIS GUARD DOWN?'
'WHERE DOES REI GET TO CRY?'

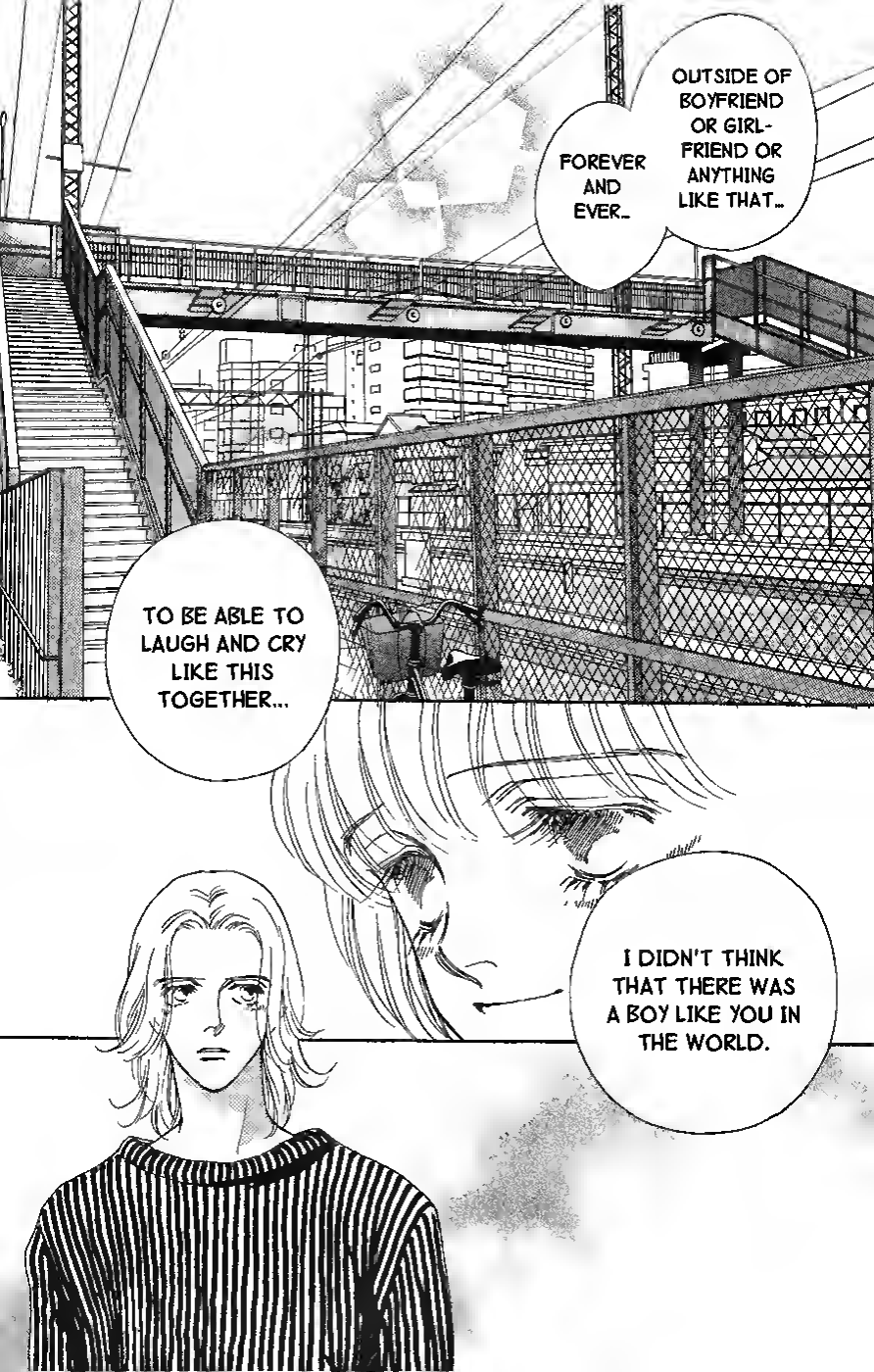
'IT'S NOT THAT REI DOESN'T CRY...'
'IT'S THAT HE CAN'T CRY.'

KENNY, COULD YOU LEND ME SOME MONEY?
WHAT HAP-PENED?
YOUR EYES...
.....
I WANTED TO GO BUY WATER, BUT I HAVE NO MONEY...
I CRIED LIKE CRAZY AND I'M THIRSTY.
1000 YEN IS ALL I NEED.
1000 YEN...
IT'S OKAY, TAKE IT. IN TIMES OF NEED...
.....
GOOD LUCK.

OH.. I DON'T NEED A BAG I'M DRINKING IT NOW.
THAT'LL BE 130 YEN.
evian
THANK YOU.
HNH

GLUG GLUG
WHO KNEW WATER COULD TASTE SO GOOD?
MMM.
YUMMY.
BOTH OF US WITH OUR EYES ALL RED...
WHAT DO YOU THINK PEOPLE ARE THINKING?
BUT IT'S WEIRD FOR BOTH OF US TO BE CRYING.
AND WE DON'T LOOK LIKE SIB-LINGS.
THAT WE'RE A COUPLE RIGHT AFTER A FIGHT, PROBABLY...

I GUESS AS FRIENDS...
...WE FELT THE SAME WAY AND ENDED UP CRYING...
BUT THIS IS NICE, TOO...
TO BE ABLE TO SHARE THE SAME FEELINGS IN A PLATONIC FRIENDSHIP.
I WANT TO BE ABLE TO BE LIKE THIS WITH YOU FOREVER.

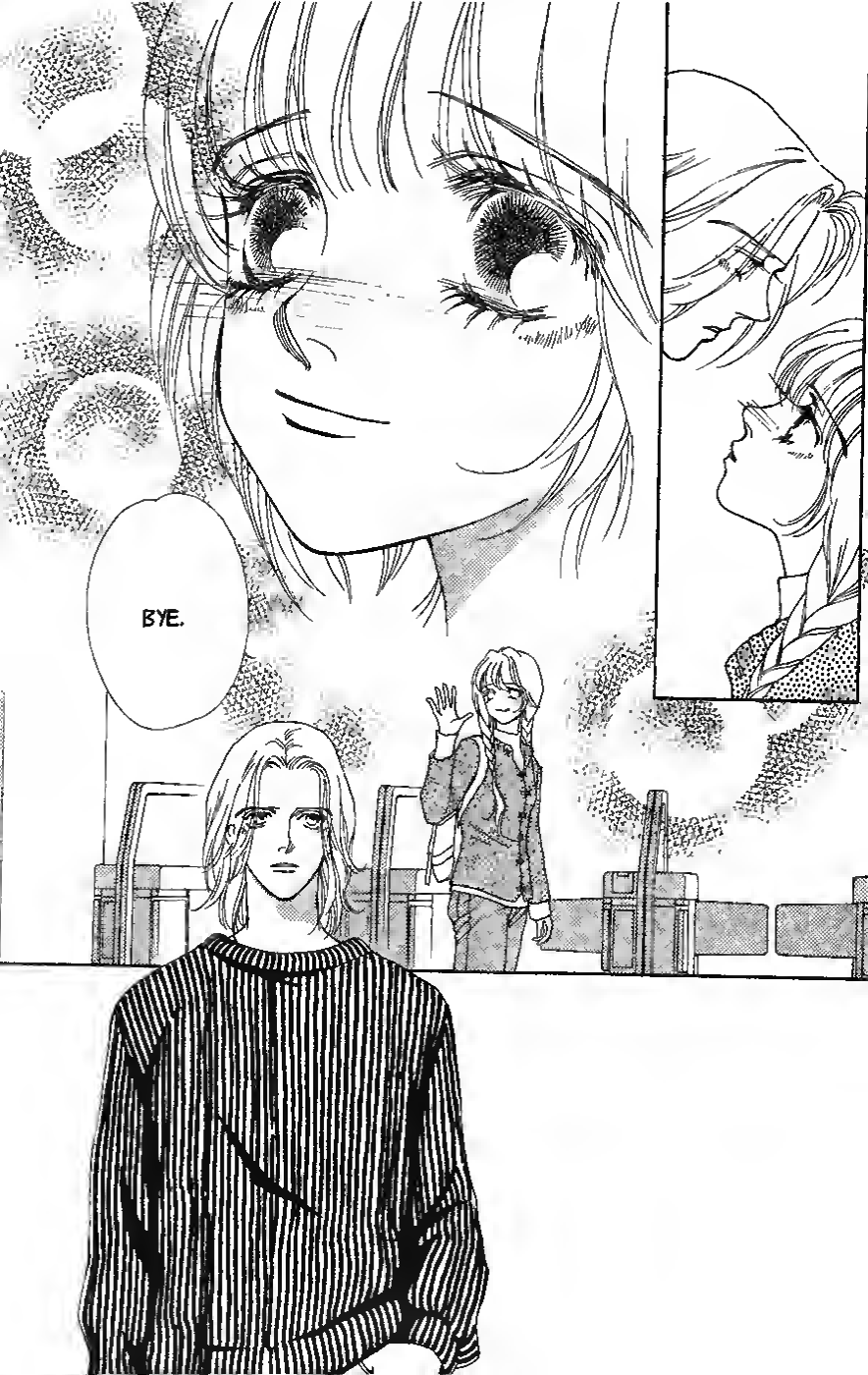

FOREVER AND EVER..
OUTSIDE OF BOYFRIEND OR GIRL-FRIEND OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT..
TO BE ABLE TO LAUGH AND CRY LIKE THIS TOGETHER...
I DIDN'T THINK THAT THERE WAS A BOY LIKE YOU IN THE WORLD.

I'M GLAD WE MET.
I'M GLAD I MET YOU, REI.
I'M GOING TO REMEMBER TODAY...

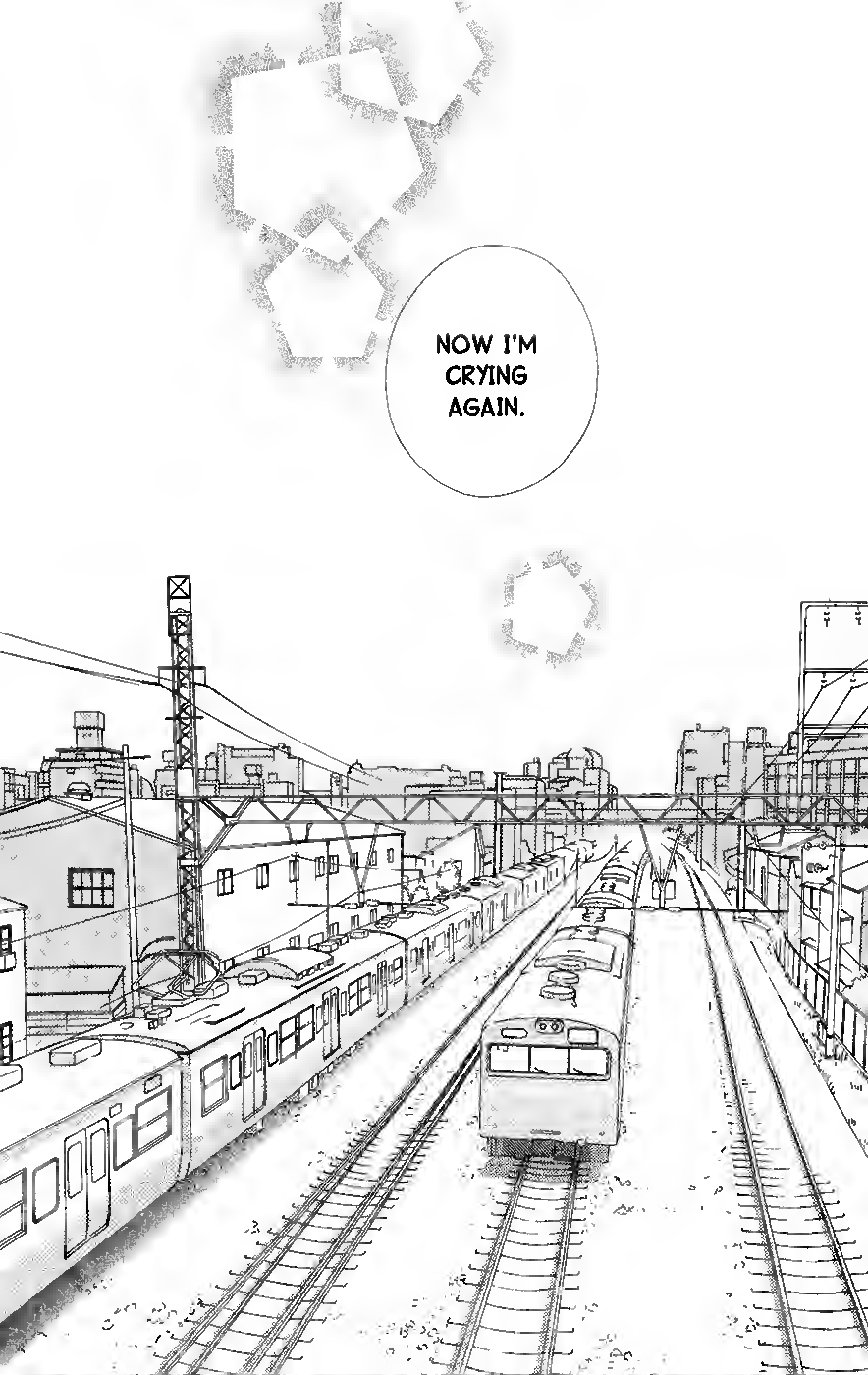
THAT WE CRIED TOGETHER...
THAT WE WALKED TOGETHER...
EVEN IF THIS ENDS UP
BEING THE END FOR US...
I WON'T FORGET THIS MOMENT.

THANKS FOR EVERYTHING...
SINCE YESTERDAY...
I FEEL LIKE I OWE YOU BIG-TIME...
YOU DON'T OWE ME.
UH...
UM...

COULD YOU KISS ME?
UM...
DON'T FRIENDS KISS EACH OTHER IN AMERICA?
THAT'S WHY, UM...
A FRIENDLY KISS.

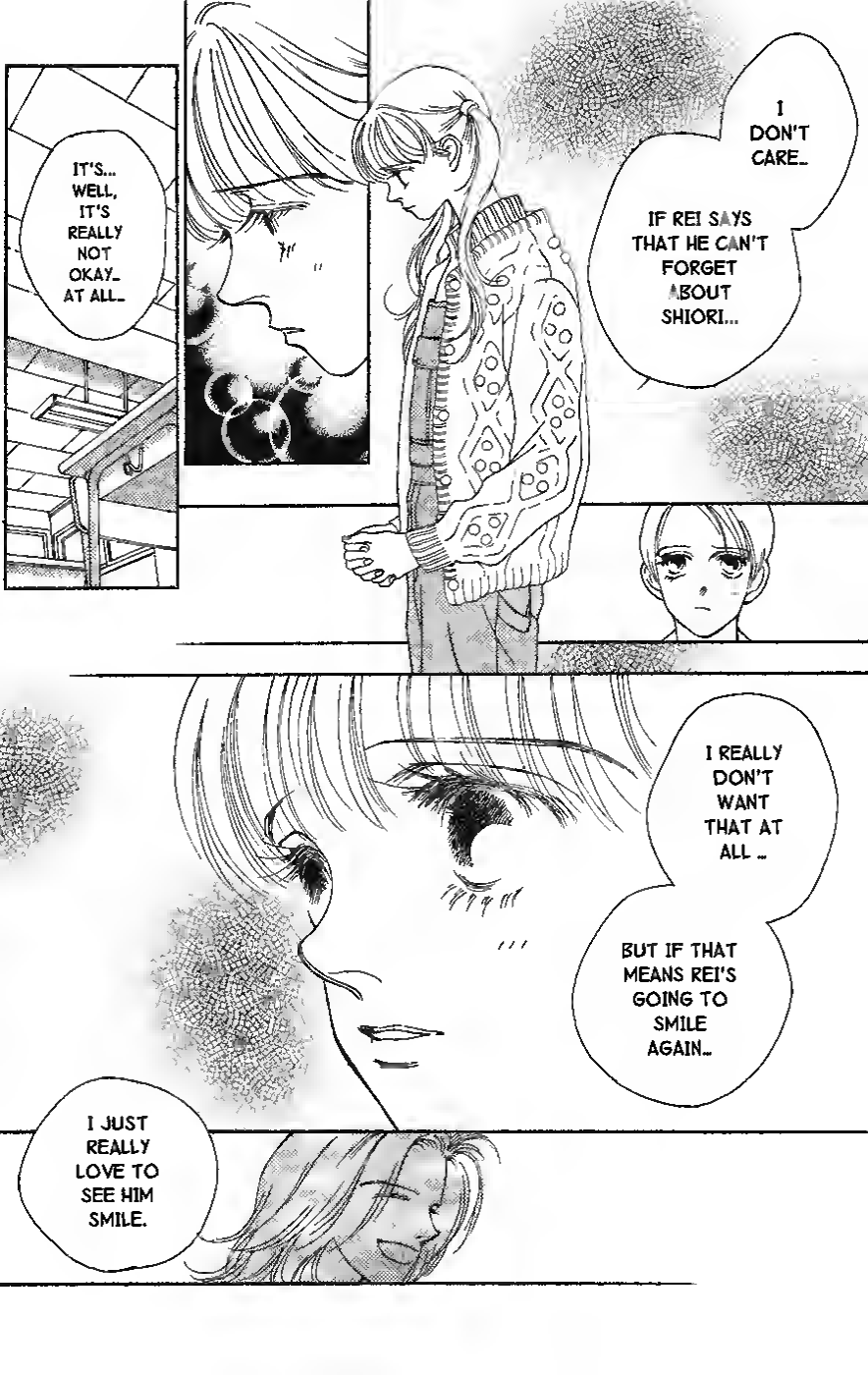

BYE.

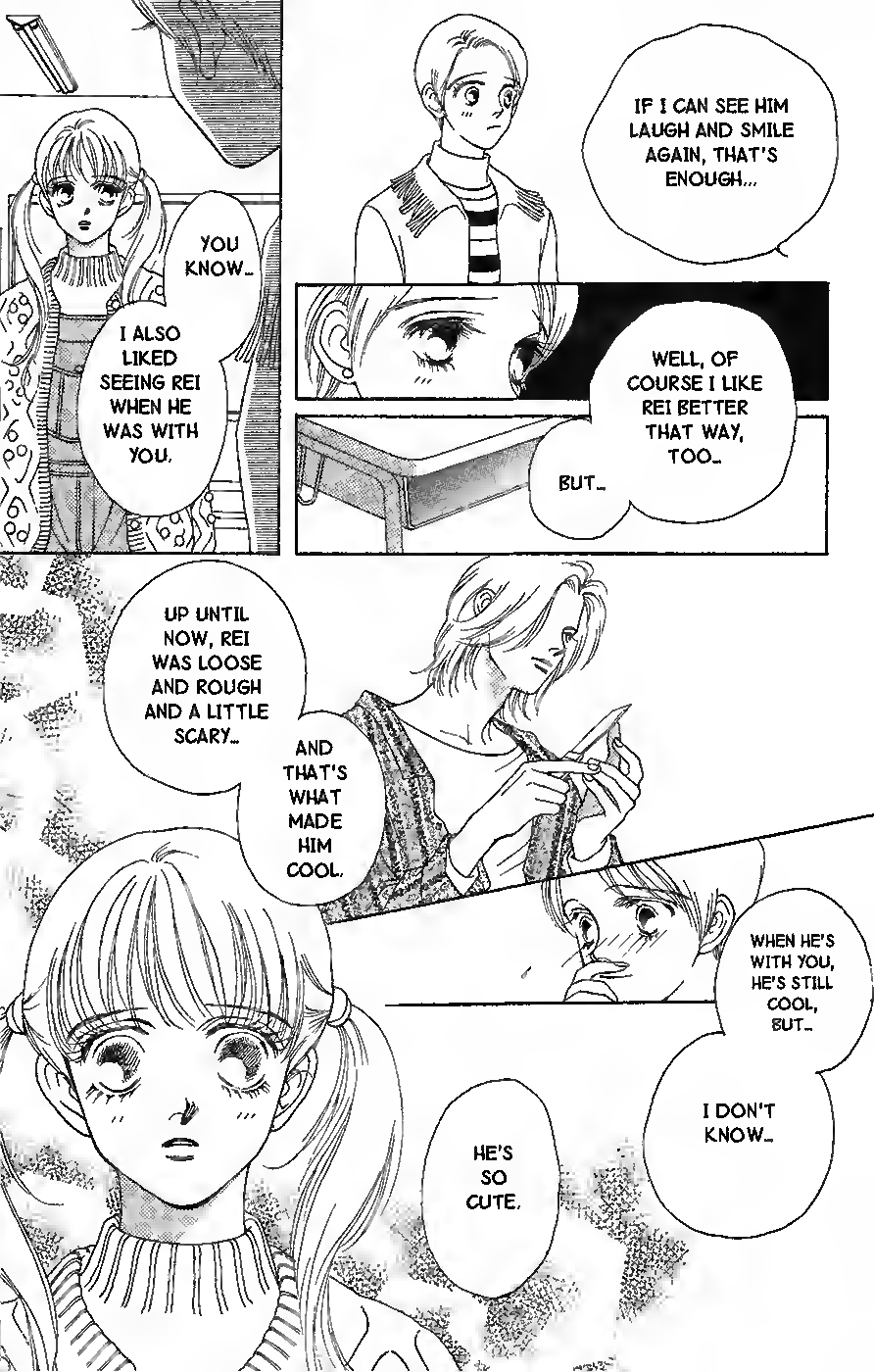
GLUNK
GLUNK
GLUNK
GLUNK
GLUNK
I SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD ANY WATER...

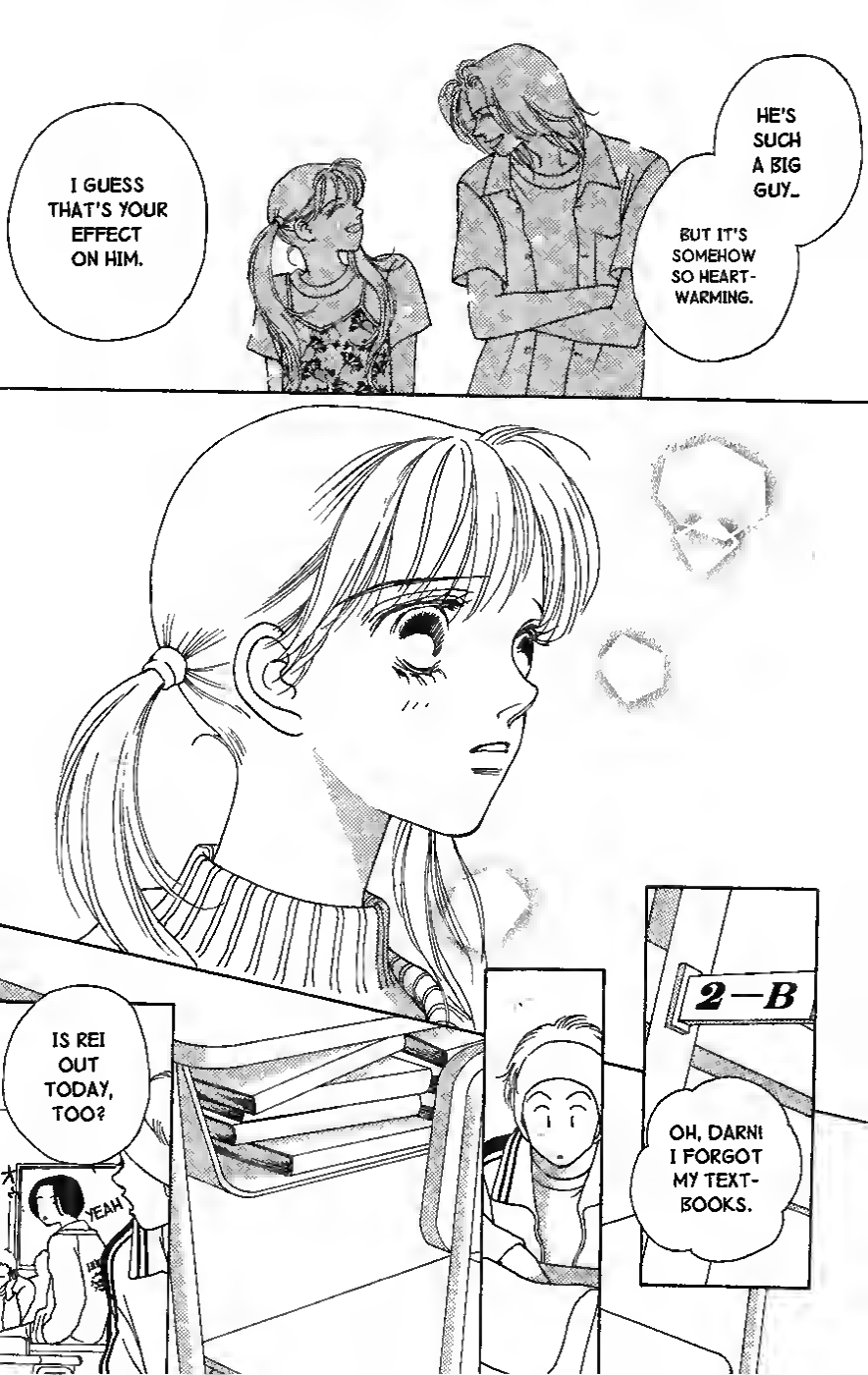

NOW I'M CRYING AGAIN.

MARS

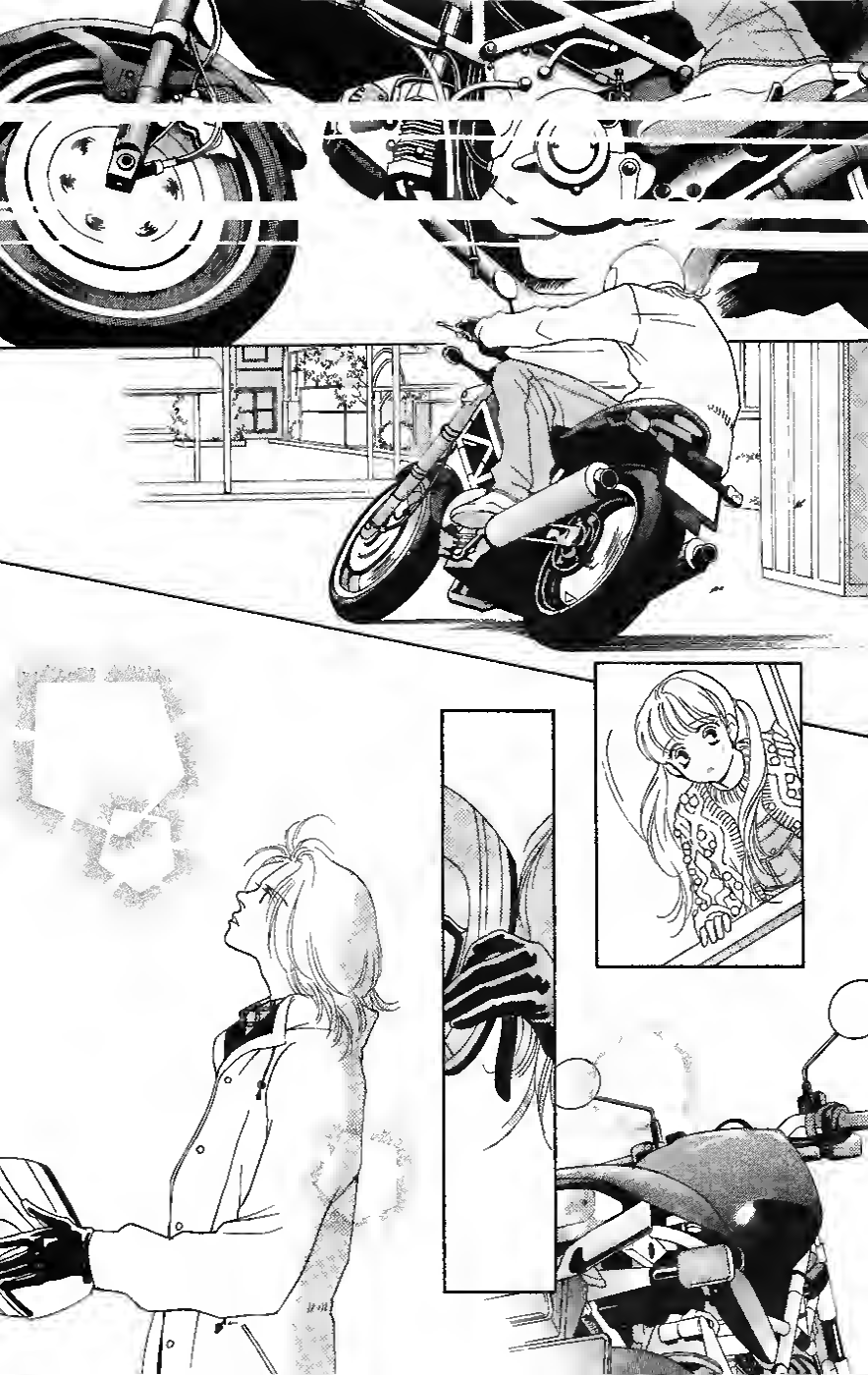
ARE YOU STUPID?
YOU SLEPT OVER AT REI'S PLACE...
AND ALL YOU DID WAS TAKE CARE OF HIM AND COOK?
THEN YOU REALLY WILL JUST BE A WOMAN OF CONVENIENCE.
KEEP IT UP, AND REI REALLY WILL END UP WITH SHIORI!

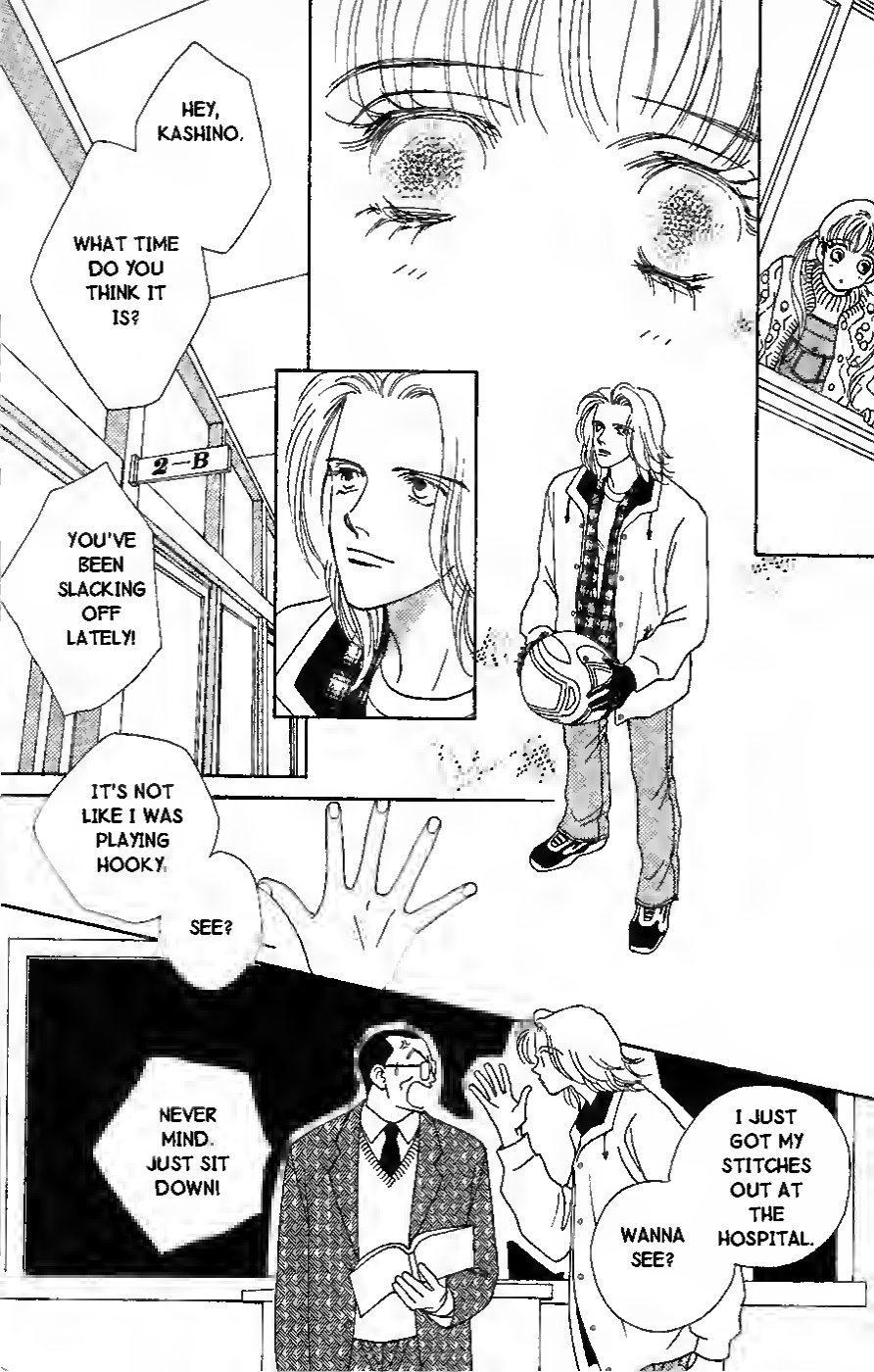

IT'S... WELL, IT'S REALLY NOT OKAY... AT ALL...
I DON'T CARE...
IF REI SAYS THAT HE CAN'T FORGET ABOUT SHIORI...
I REALLY DON'T WANT THAT AT ALL...
BUT IF THAT MEANS REI'S GOING TO SMILE AGAIN...
I JUST REALLY LOVE TO SEE HIM SMILE.


IF I CAN SEE HIM LAUGH AND SMILE AGAIN, THAT'S ENOUGH...
WELL, OF COURSE I LIKE REI BETTER THAT WAY, TOO...
BUT...
YOU KNOW...
I ALSO LIKED SEEING REI WHEN HE WAS WITH YOU.
UP UNTIL NOW, REI WAS LOOSE AND ROUGH AND A LITTLE SCARY...
AND THAT'S WHAT MADE HIM COOL.
WHEN HE'S WITH YOU, HE'S STILL COOL, BUT...
I DON'T KNOW...
HE'S SO CUTE.


I GUESS THAT'S YOUR EFFECT ON HIM.
HE'S SUCH A BIG GUY...
BUT IT'S SOMEHOW SO HEART-WARMING.
2—B
OH, DARN! I FORGOT MY TEXT-BOOKS.
IS REI OUT TODAY, TOO?
YEAH

HE ALWAYS LEAVES HIS BOOKS HERE
COOL. I'M BORROWING HIS, MAN.
I WONDER HOW...
REI'S BEEN SINCE THEN..
DON'T TELL ME ...
SOMETHING HAPPENED.



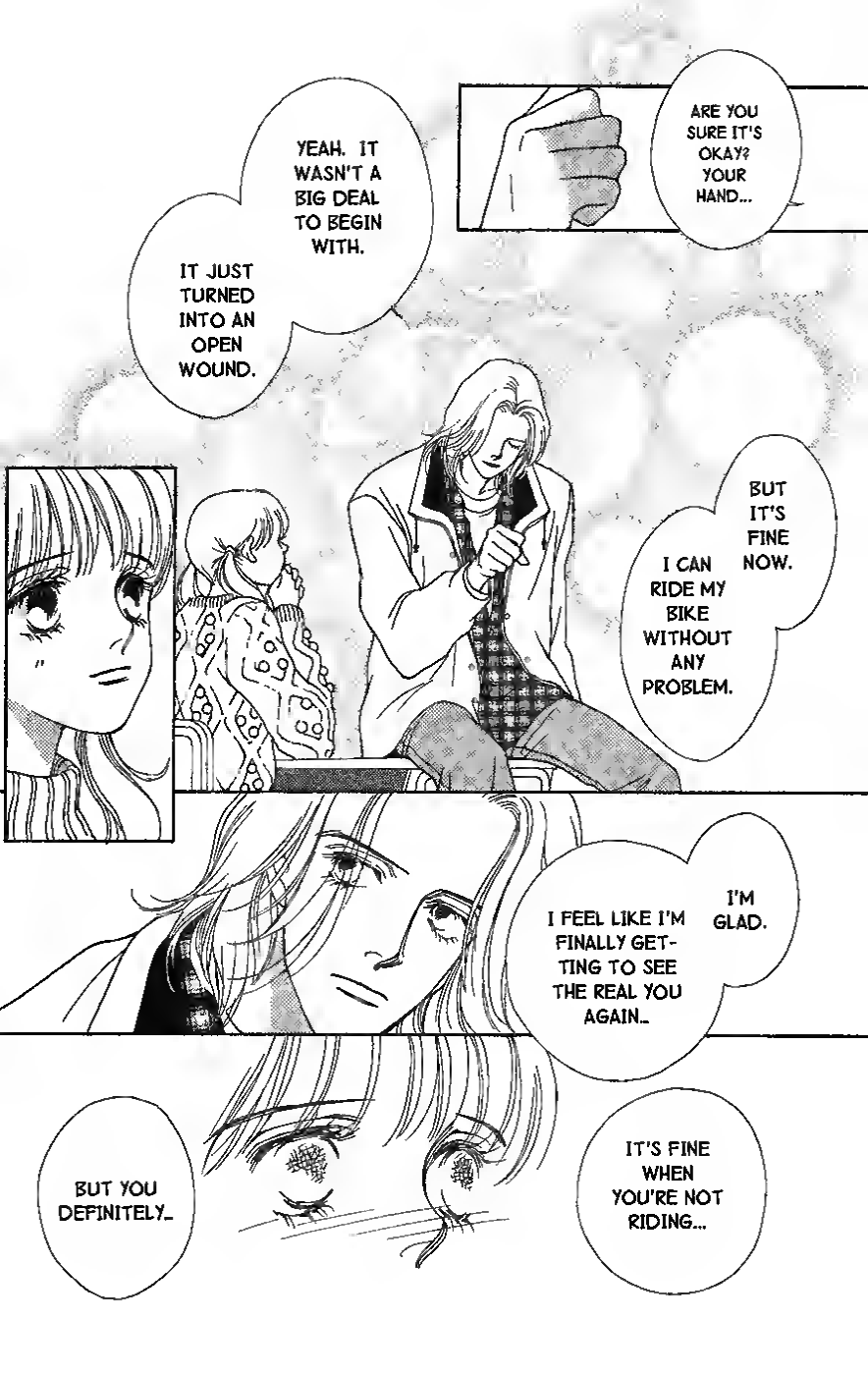

HEY, KASHINO.
WHAT TIME DO YOU THINK IT IS?
2-B
YOU'VE BEEN SLACKING OFF LATELY!
IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS PLAYING HOOKY.
SEE?
NEVER MIND. JUST SIT DOWN!
WANNA SEE?
I JUST GOT MY STITCHES OUT AT THE HOSPITAL.

HEY, KASHINO!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? THAT'S NOT VERY NICE.
YOU DUMB-ASS. YOU'RE JUST GONNA SLEEP ANYWAY.
HEY.
MY BOOKS ARE GONE. SOMEONE TOOK 'EM?
IT'S ALWAYS SO NOISY WHEN YOU'RE AROUND. I CAN'T COMPETE.
PFT
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING BACK FROM, EH?
HEEEY. WHAT'S UP WITH EVERYONE? CAN'T ALLOW A GUY TO GET BACK ON HIS FEET?

HEY, TATSUYA!
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN WITH THOSE TWO?
DING DONG DING
I GUESS WHATEVER'S GONNA HAPPEN WILL HAPPEN.
IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
NO WAY, IT TOTALLY DOES.
IF...
IF THOSE TWO BREAK UP, IT MEANS KIRA WILL BE FREE.
YOU STILL LIKE HER, RIGHT?
KIRA ?
THAT MEANS YOU MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE WITH HER.

EVEN IF I DO LIKE HER, THIS IS TOO MUCH.
THERE'S NO POINT GETTING WORKED UP.
WHAT ABOUT YOURSELF?
YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN UP ON REI HAVE YOU?
IF REI ENDS UP GETTING BACK TOGETHER WITH SHIORI, DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GOING TO...
NO WAY!
EVEN I'M NOT THAT MUCH OF A PAIN IN THE BUTT.
ANYWAY, REI WOULD NEVER TAKE ME SERIOUSLY.
I'M NOT ADMIRABLE LIKE KIRA...
AND I'M NOT THE TYPE TO DRIVE MEN WILD LIKE SHIORI...
BASICALLY, I'M NOT ATTRACTIVE.

YOU'RE ATTRACTIVE!
HMM..
THE WAY YOU GET ALL DEFEN-SIVE...
ATTRAC-TIVE?..
NOW?
YOU GET ALL WORKED UP AND GET MAD AND CRY...
YEAH! THAT'S SUPER-CUTE ABOUT YOU.
STUPID..
FLATTERING ME WON'T GET YOU ANY.

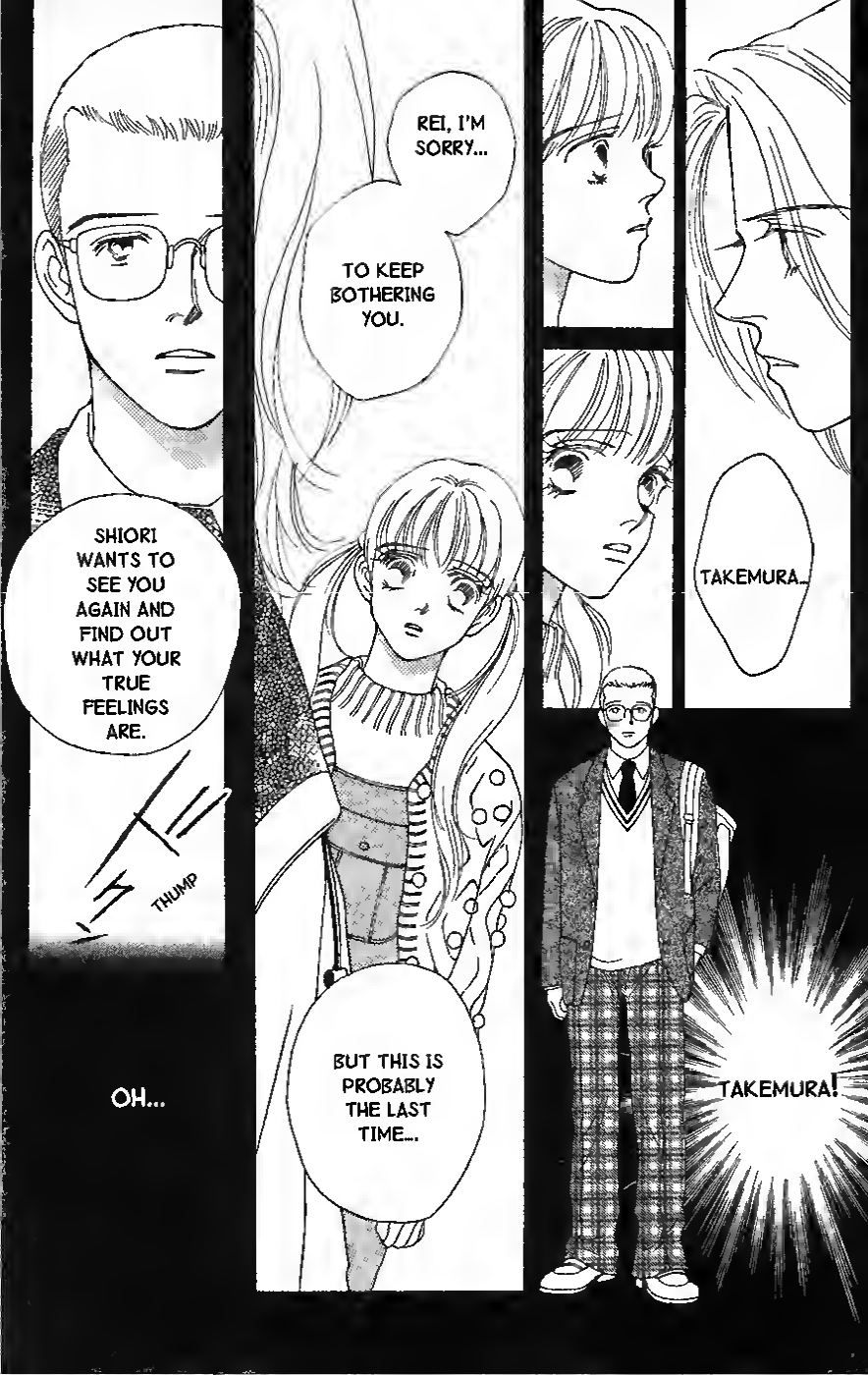

ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY? YOUR HAND...
YEAH. IT WASN'T A BIG DEAL TO BEGIN WITH.
IT JUST TURNED INTO AN OPEN WOUND.
BUT IT'S FINE NOW.
I CAN RIDE MY BIKE WITHOUT ANY PROBLEM.
I'M GLAD.
I FEEL LIKE I'M FINALLY GET-TING TO SEE THE REAL YOU AGAIN..
IT'S FINE WHEN YOU'RE NOT RIDING...
BUT YOU DEFINITELY..

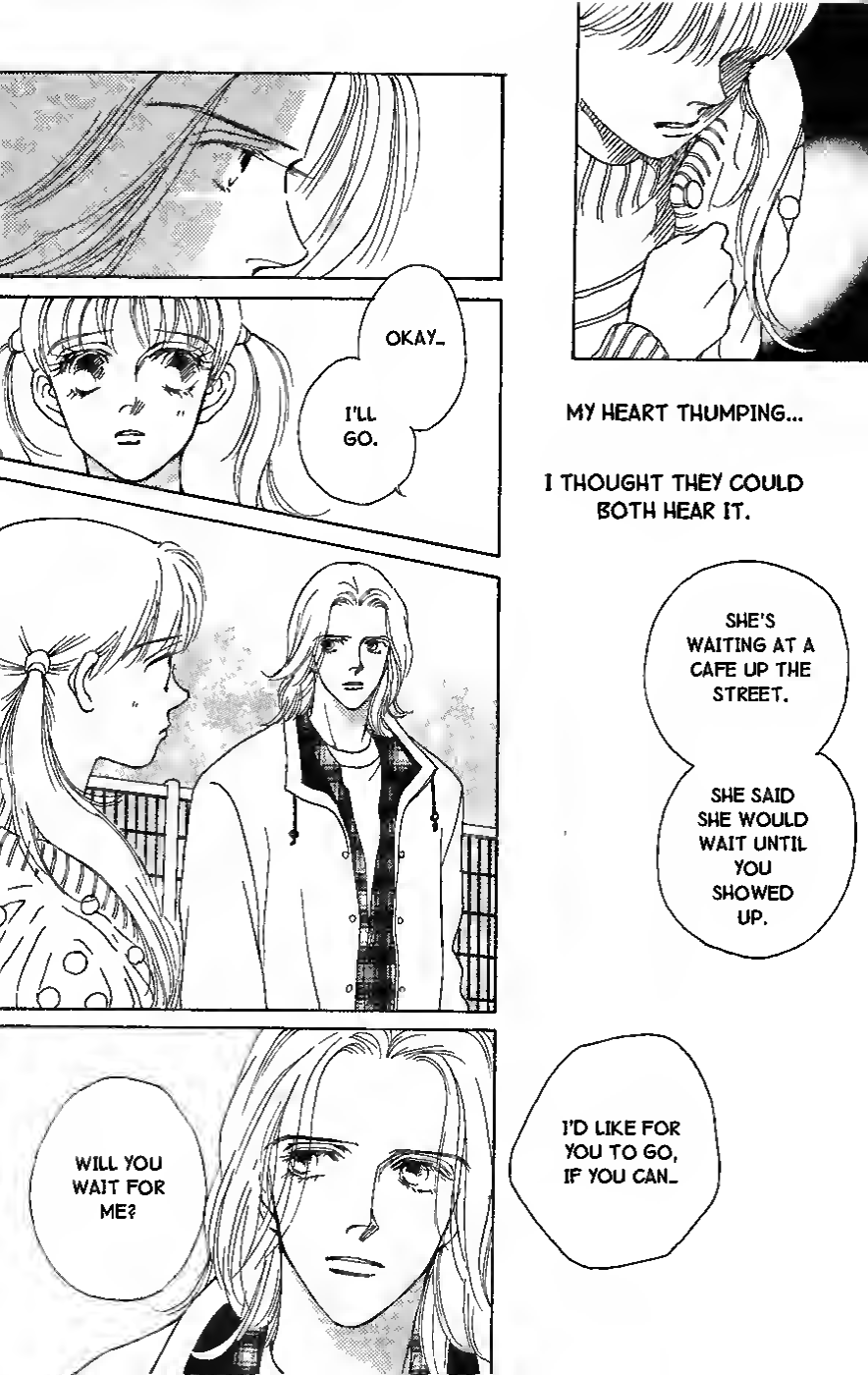
...ARE THE MOST YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE RIDING.
HEY...
YOU WANT TO GO SOME-WHERE?
I FEEL LIKE TAKING A LONG RIDE ON MY BIKE...

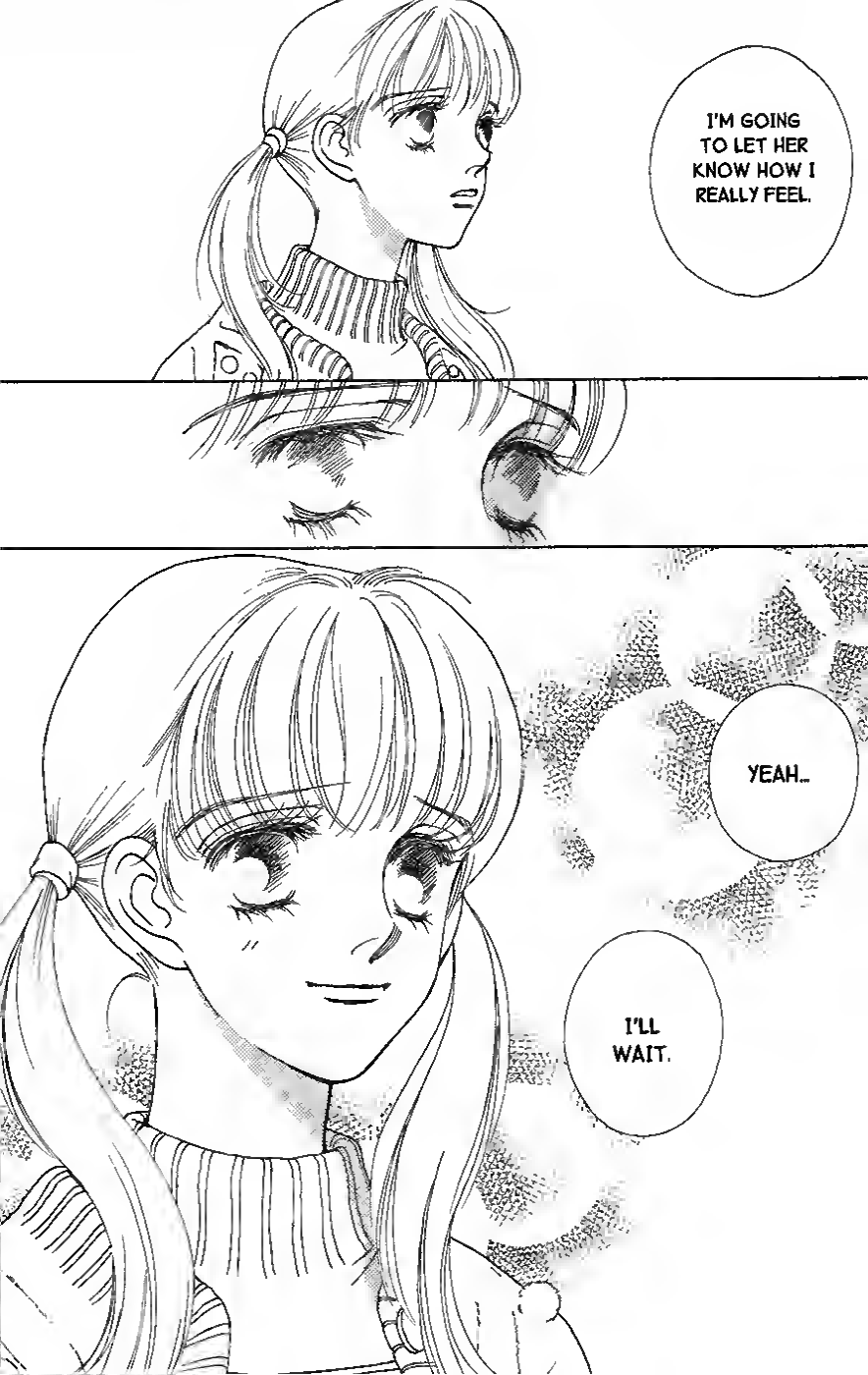
UH.. UM, REI..
WHERE SHOULD WE GO?
THE OCEAN? THE MOUN-TAINS?
?
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT ME TO RIDE WITH YOU?
SHIORI? HUH?
I CAN'T IMAGINE HER RIDING WITH ME.
UM...
WH..WHAT ABOUT... SHIORI?

DID YOU SPEAK TO HER AFTER THAT?
I THINK IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAT YOU BECOME HONEST WITH YOUR FEELINGS...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
I CAN'T BE FRIENDS WITH A GIRL.
AND I FIGURED OUT...
I THOUGHT ABOUT IT...
WAY SERIOUSLY FOR ME...

I LIKE THEM OR DON'T LIKE THEM.
THAT'S IT.
I CAN'T GET AROUND IT AS NIMBLY AS YOU CAN.
THAT'S WHY...


REI, I'M SORRY...
TO KEEP BOTHERING YOU.
TAKEMURA...
SHIORI WANTS TO SEE YOU AGAIN AND FIND OUT WHAT YOUR TRUE FEELINGS ARE.
THUMP
OH...
BUT THIS IS PROBABLY THE LAST TIME...
TAKEMURA!


MY HEART THUMPING...
I THOUGHT THEY COULD BOTH HEAR IT.
OKAY.. I'LL GO.
SHE'S WAITING AT A CAFE UP THE STREET.
SHE SAID SHE WOULD WAIT UNTIL YOU SHOWED UP.
I'D LIKE FOR YOU TO GO, IF YOU CAN..
WILL YOU WAIT FOR ME?


I'M GOING TO LET HER KNOW HOW I REALLY FEEL.
YEAH..
I'LL WAIT.

I'LL BE WAITING...
AT THE PARK BY THE TRAIN STATION.
SHE'S A NICE GIRL...
KIRA.
I'M MAKING SUCH A NICE GIRL GO THROUGH ALL OF THIS.
SHE... MUST RESENT ME.

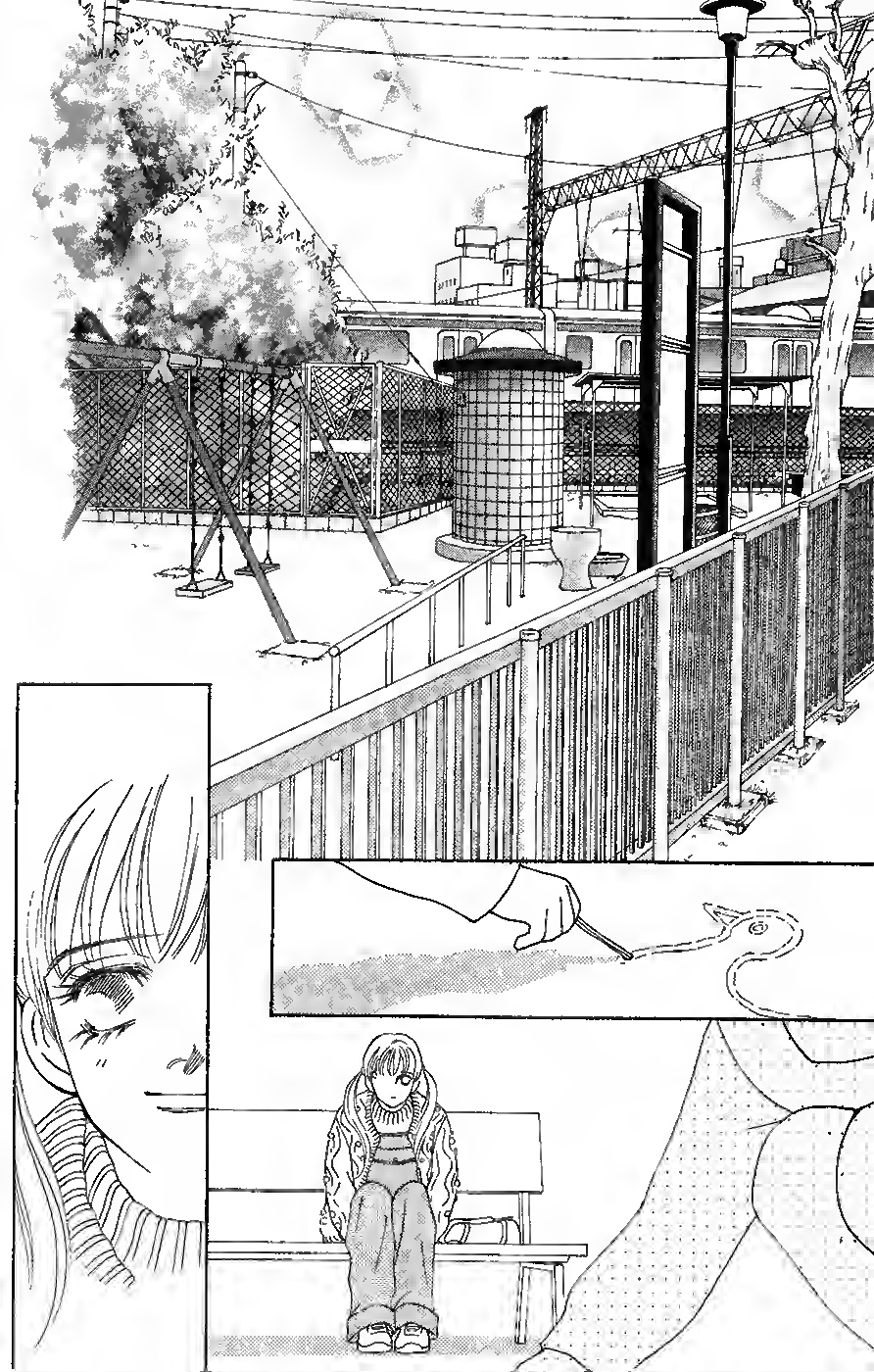
SHE'S NOT PETTY LIKE THAT.
I'M GOING TO BE BLUNT...
...BUT MAYBE YOU'RE SEEING KIRA AS A REPLACEMENT FOR SEI.
SHIORI SAID THAT KIRA REMINDS HER OF SEI...
AND THAT'S WHY YOU...
I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF YOU AS A STRONG PERSON.
BUT AFTER SEI DIED, I SAW YOU CHANGE A LOT...
THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT SEI WAS TO YOU.

I'M WEAK AND UGLY.
I AM WEAK.
I CAN'T IMAGINE YOU'RE THAT WEAK.
IF YOUR FEELINGS TOWARD HER ARE ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
THAT'S NOT LOVE, IT'S JUST DEPENDENCE.
I'M THE ONE WHO TOLD SEI ABOUT OUR FATHER.
I KNEW WHAT HE WOULD DO IF HE FOUND OUT, AND I TOLD HIM ANYWAY.
I DON'T KNOW...
WHY I DID THAT...

I WAS PROBABLY JEALOUS..
I THOUGHT I WOULD BE FREE AS LONG AS HE WASN'T AROUND.
NOT ONLY DID IT NOT FREE ME, BUT I BECAME EVEN MORE TIED DOWN. HOW PATHETIC.
...OF MY BROTHER, WHO WAS LIKE ME, BUT WITH A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PERSONALITY.
I HATED MYSELF FOR BEING THAT WAY..
I WOULD RUN AROUND THE STREETS BEING CRAZY..
AND GETTING IN TROUBLE.

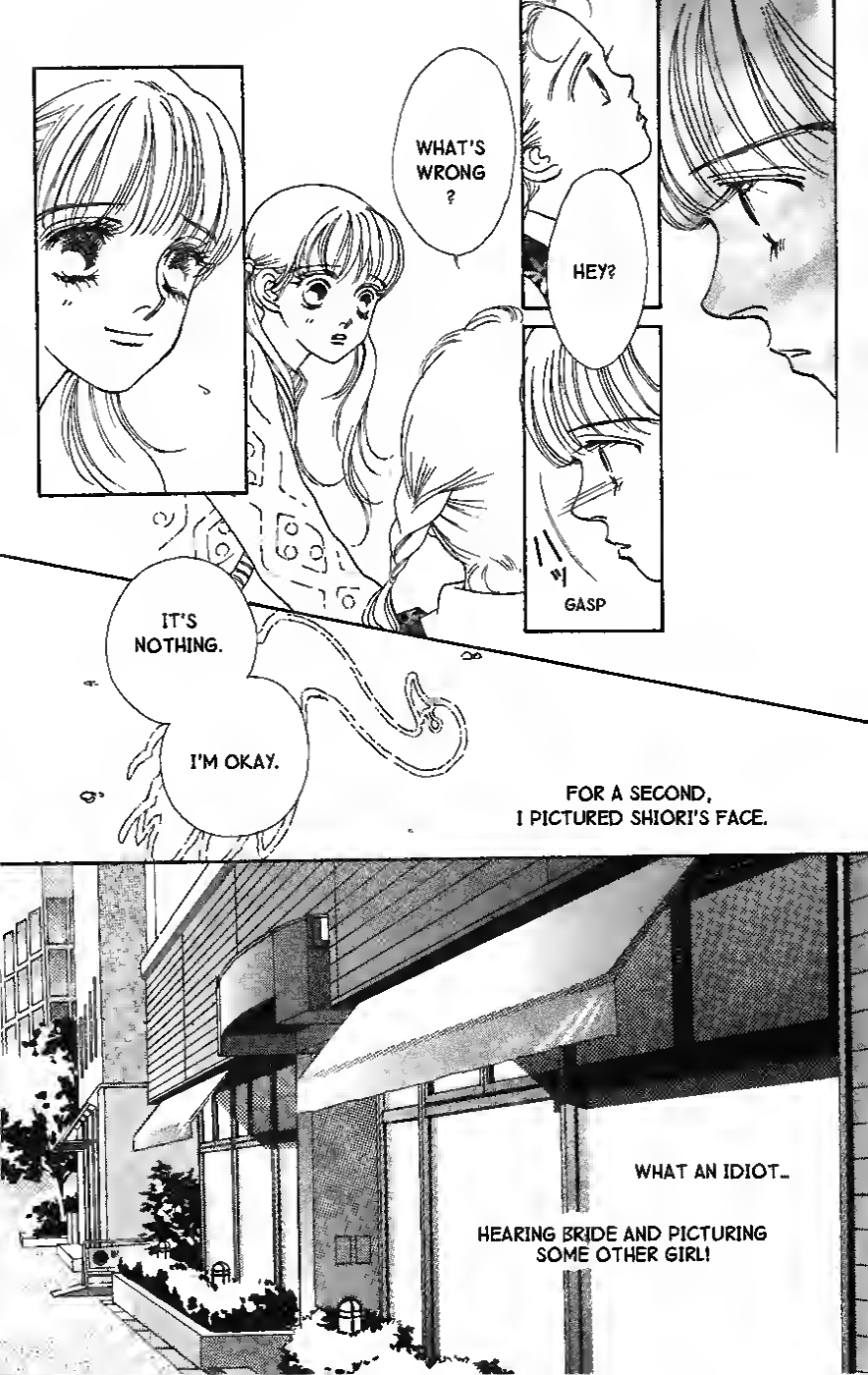
EVENTUALLY MY OLD MAN REFUSED TO PUT UP WITH ME..
AND SENT ME OFF TO THAT SHRINK.
.....
OH..
BUT I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE THING WITH KIRA AND SHIORI, SO DON'T WORRY.
EVEN AFTER LEAVING THE CENTER AND STARTING SCHOOL, I JUST GLIDED ALONG.
I JUST DIDN'T CARE ANYMORE
BUT YOU DID LOVE SEI, DIDN'T YOU?

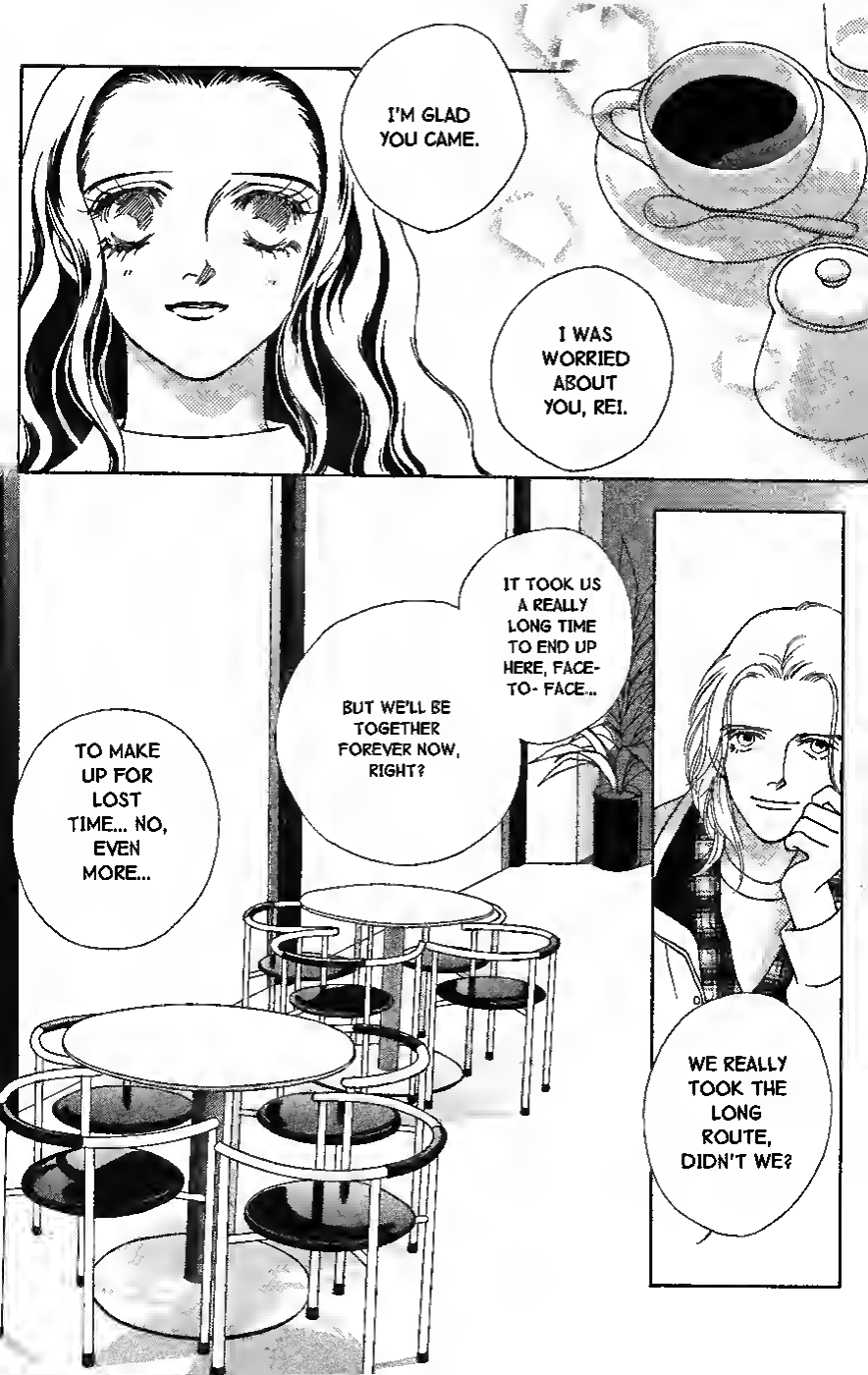
YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN HIM, HAVE YOU?
YEAH..
I'D LIKE TO SEE HIM AGAIN IF I COULD.

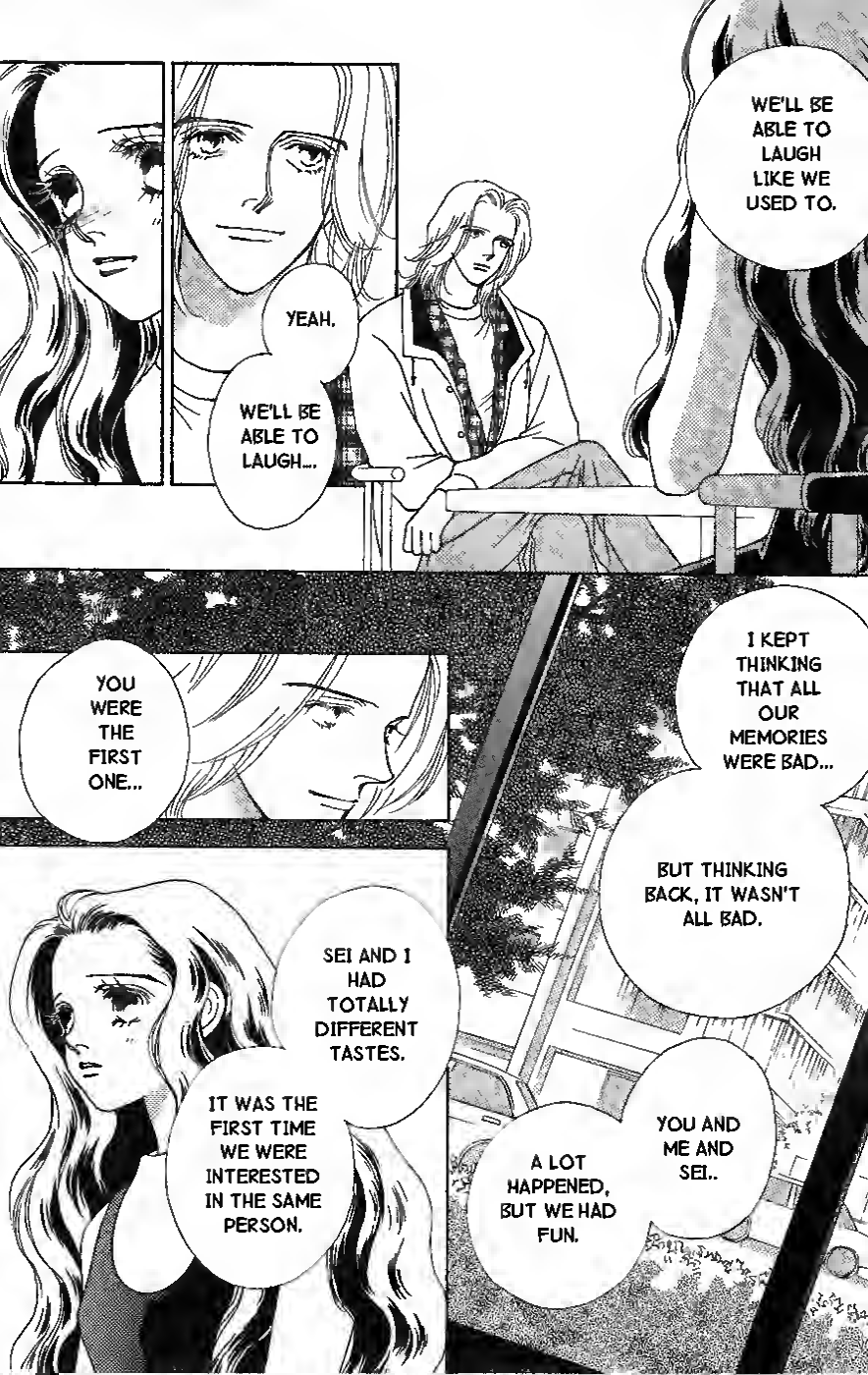


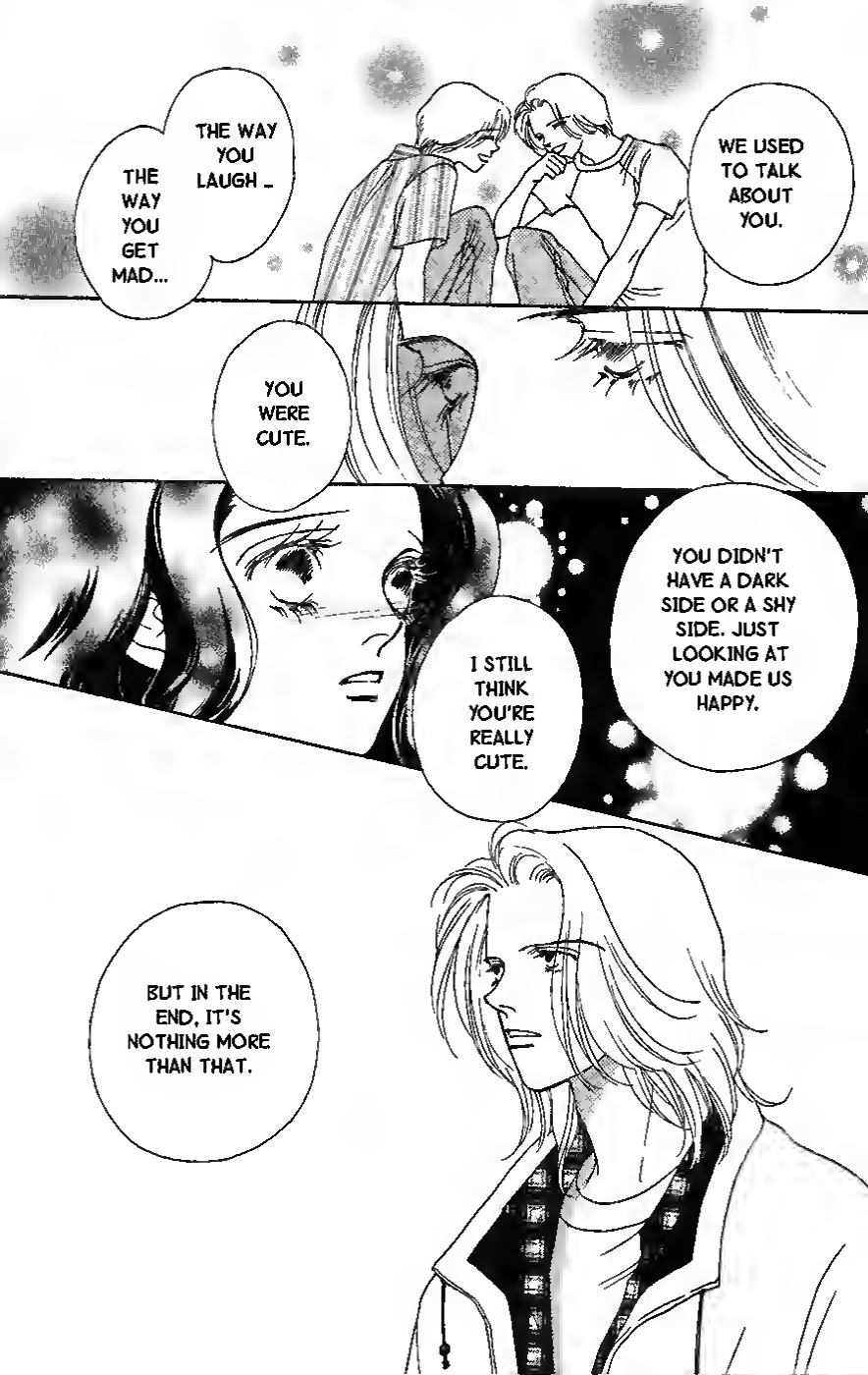
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DRAWING?
A BIRDIE.
REALLY?
AND SWANS HAVE LONG NECKS.
IT'S GOOD, BUT BIRDIES DON'T HAVE THAT MANY LEGS.
WHAT KIND OF BIRD IS IT?
A SWAN.
OH, IT'S A SWAN.
DO YOU WANT ME TO MAKE IT SWIM IN THE WATER?
!

A REALLY PRETTY BRIDE!
WEARING A DRESS WITH LOTS OF FLOWERS.
WOW! IT LOOKS REAL.
YOU'RE SO GOOD.
HEY, HEY, CAN YOU DRAW OTHER THINGS LIKE THEY'RE REAL, TOO?
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DRAW?
UM, UM...
A BRIDE!


WHAT'S WRONG ?
HEY?
GASP
IT'S NOTHING.
I'M OKAY.
FOR A SECOND, I PICTURED SHIORI'S FACE.
WHAT AN IDIOT...
HEARING BRIDE AND PICTURING SOME OTHER GIRL!

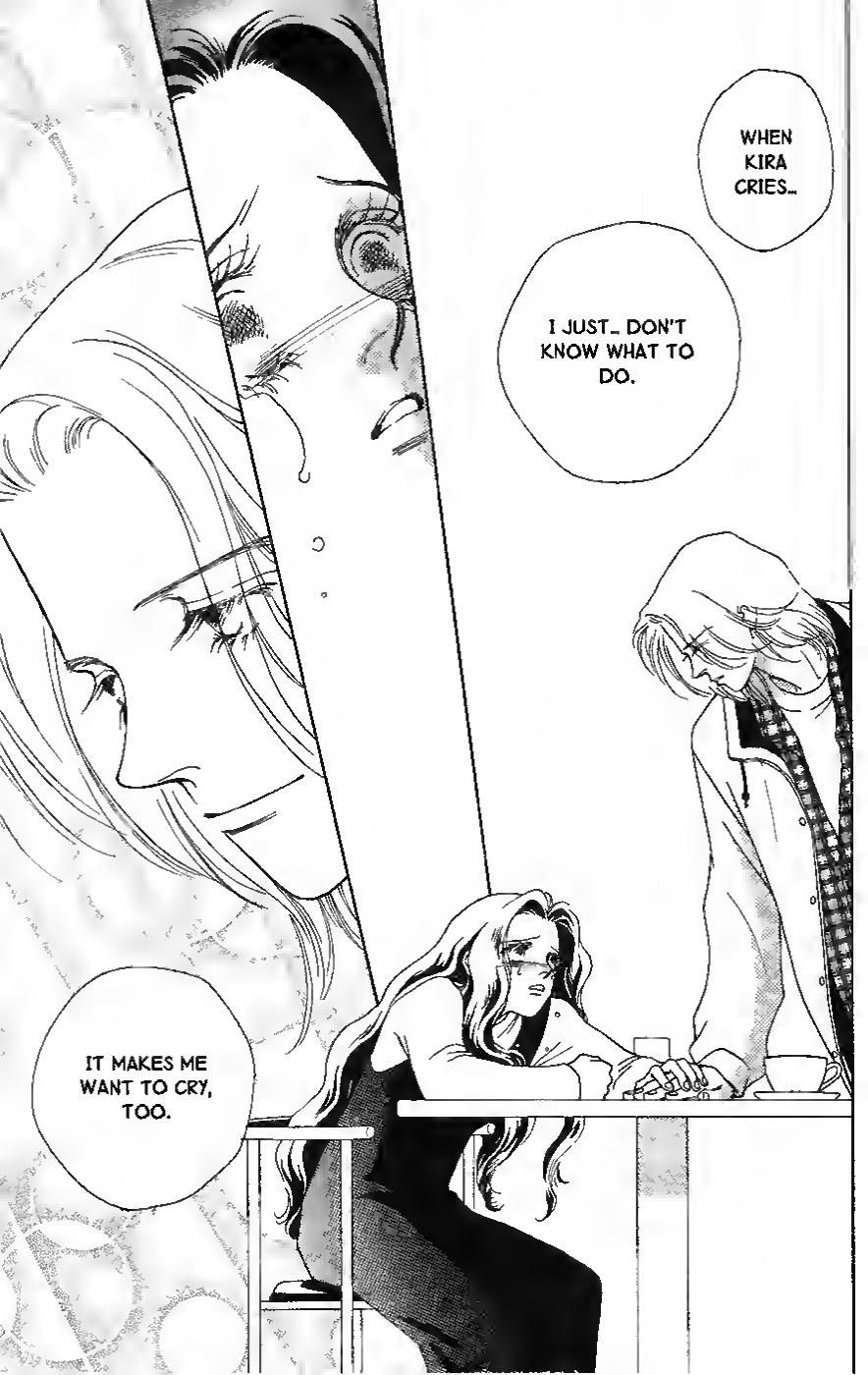

I'M GLAD YOU CAME.
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU, REI.
IT TOOK US A REALLY LONG TIME TO END UP HERE, FACE-TO- FACE...
BUT WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER NOW, RIGHT?
TO MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME... NO, EVEN MORE...
WE REALLY TOOK THE LONG ROUTE, DIDN'T WE?


WE'LL BE ABLE TO LAUGH LIKE WE USED TO.
YEAH.
WE'LL BE ABLE TO LAUGH...
I KEPT THINKING THAT ALL OUR MEMORIES WERE BAD...
YOU WERE THE FIRST ONE...
BUT THINKING BACK, IT WASN'T ALL BAD.
SEI AND I HAD TOTALLY DIFFERENT TASTES.
YOU AND ME AND SEI..
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE WERE INTERESTED IN THE SAME PERSON.
A LOT HAPPENED, BUT WE HAD FUN.


WE USED TO TALK ABOUT YOU.
THE WAY YOU LAUGH ..
THE WAY YOU GET MAD...
YOU WERE CUTE.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE A DARK SIDE OR A SHY SIDE. JUST LOOKING AT YOU MADE US HAPPY.
I STILL THINK YOU'RE REALLY CUTE.
BUT IN THE END, IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN THAT.

YOU'RE NOT THE GIRL OF MY DREAMS.
THUK
IT'S NOT JUST A DREAM FOR ME.
TO ME, YOU'RE..

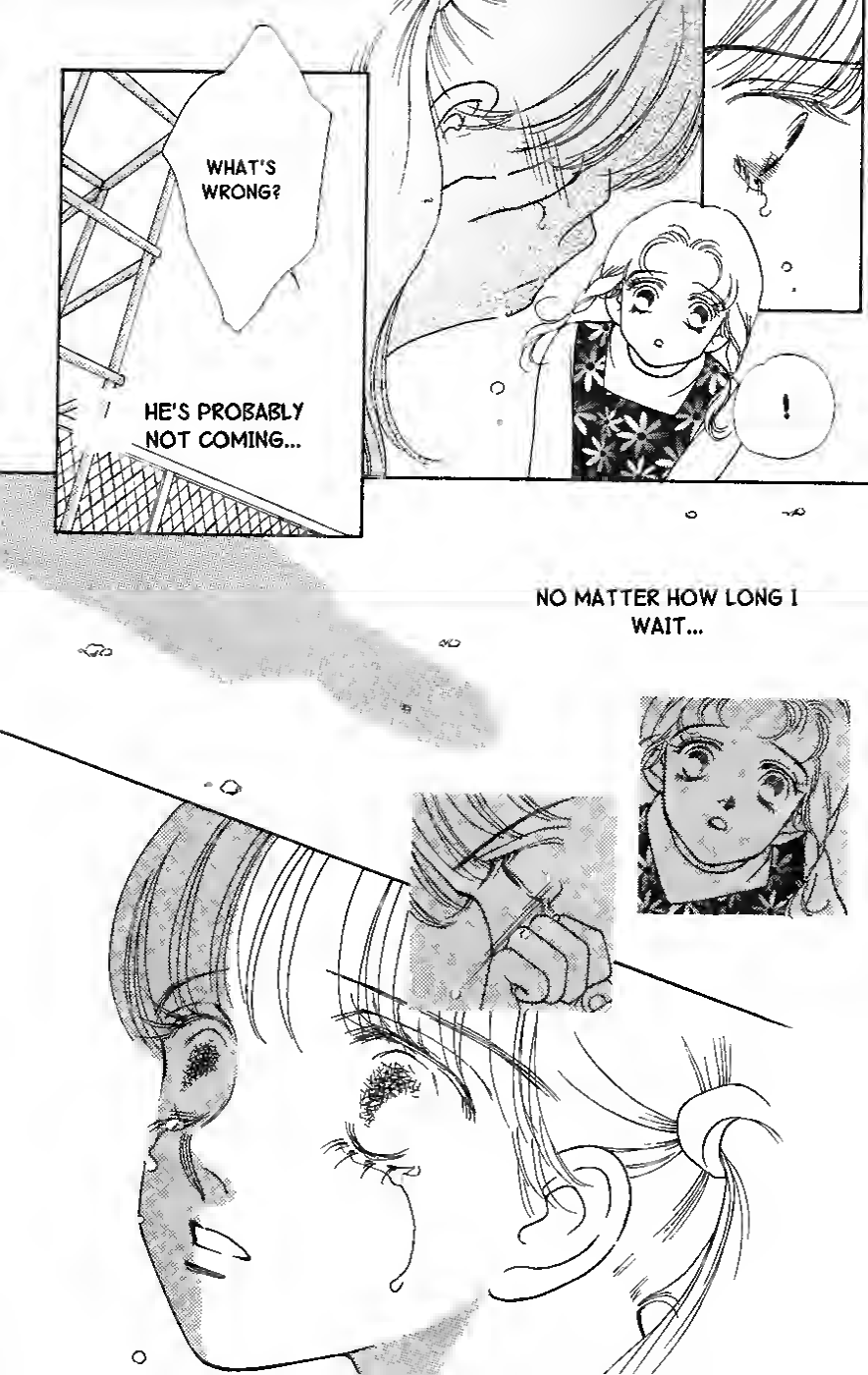
KRAASH
I'M THE ONE WHO'S CRYING!
KIRA'S WAITING.
I BETTER GET BACK SOON, I HAVE A FEELING SHE'S CRYING...
A LONG TIME AGO...
WHEN YOU OR SEI WOULD CRY, I REALLY WANTED TO DO SOMETHING.
BUT...


WHEN KIRA CRIES...
I JUST... DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
IT MAKES ME WANT TO CRY, TOO.

YOU'RE SO EASY TO READ.
YOU CAN GO NOW.
YOU'RE DYING TO LEAVE.
SHIORI...
THEY SAY THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE...
...YOU CAN'T LIVE WITH-OUT...

SEE YOU LATER.
I ALREADY FOUND MINE.
YOU GO AND FIND THAT PERSON.
STUPID..

A GROOM, HUH...
HOW'S A TUXEDO LOOK AGAIN?
DRAW MORE FLOWERS!
WHAT!? IF I DRAW ANY MORE, IT'LL BE ALL FLOWERS!
THEN DRAW THE GROOM NOW.
'WHOOOA. CAN'T PICTURE IT.'
CHUCKLE
I IMAGINE REI WEARING JEANS EVEN AT HIS WEDDING.
DROP

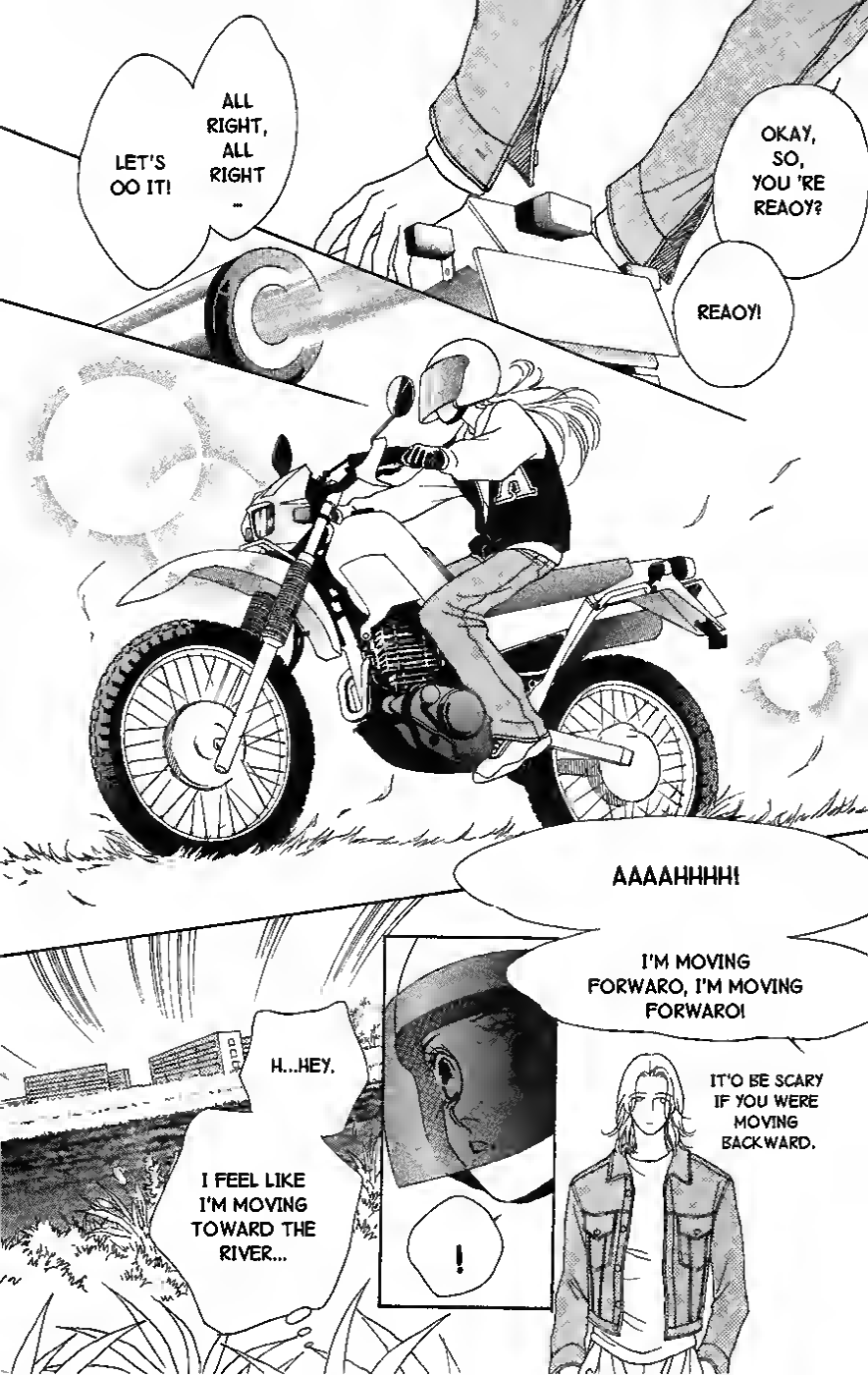

WHAT'S WRONG?
HE'S PROBABLY NOT COMING...
!
NO MATTER HOW LONG I WAIT...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

MARS

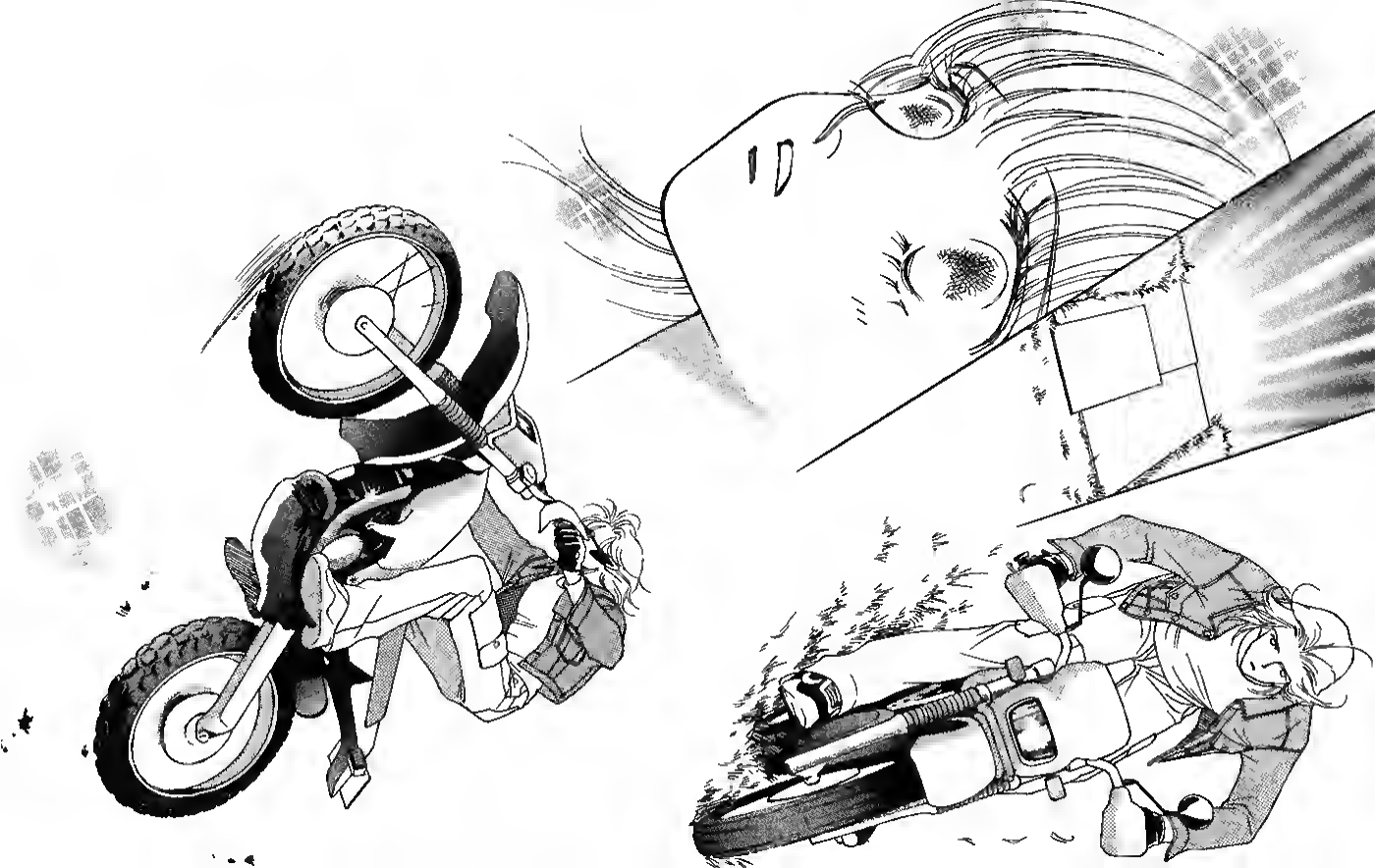
VRRRRRRRRR
TWIRL
BRRK BRRK
THE TIRES ARE OKAY!
THE BATTERIES ARE GOOD!
THE REST IS UP TO THE RIDER.

THIS LOOKS DIFFERENT FROM YOUR OTHER BIKES.
OFF-ROAD BIKES ARE MADE SO YOU CAN RIDE ON GRASS OR UP HILLS.
THEY'RE MUCH MORE STABLE THAN ROAD BIKES, SO THEY'RE PERFECT FOR BEGINNERS.
LEAVE SOME SLACK IN MY ARMS...
TUCK IN MY CHIN, UM...
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?
HMM, LET'S SEE...
I GUESS JUST DON'T FALL IN THE RIVER!
....
ドキッ


ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT ...
LET'S OO IT!
OKAY, SO, YOU 'RE REAOY?
REAOY!
AAAAHHHH!
I'M MOVING FORWARO, I'M MOVING FORWARO!
IT'O BE SCARY IF YOU WERE MOVING BACKWARD.
!
H...HEY.
I FEEL LIKE I'M MOVING TOWARD THE RIVER...

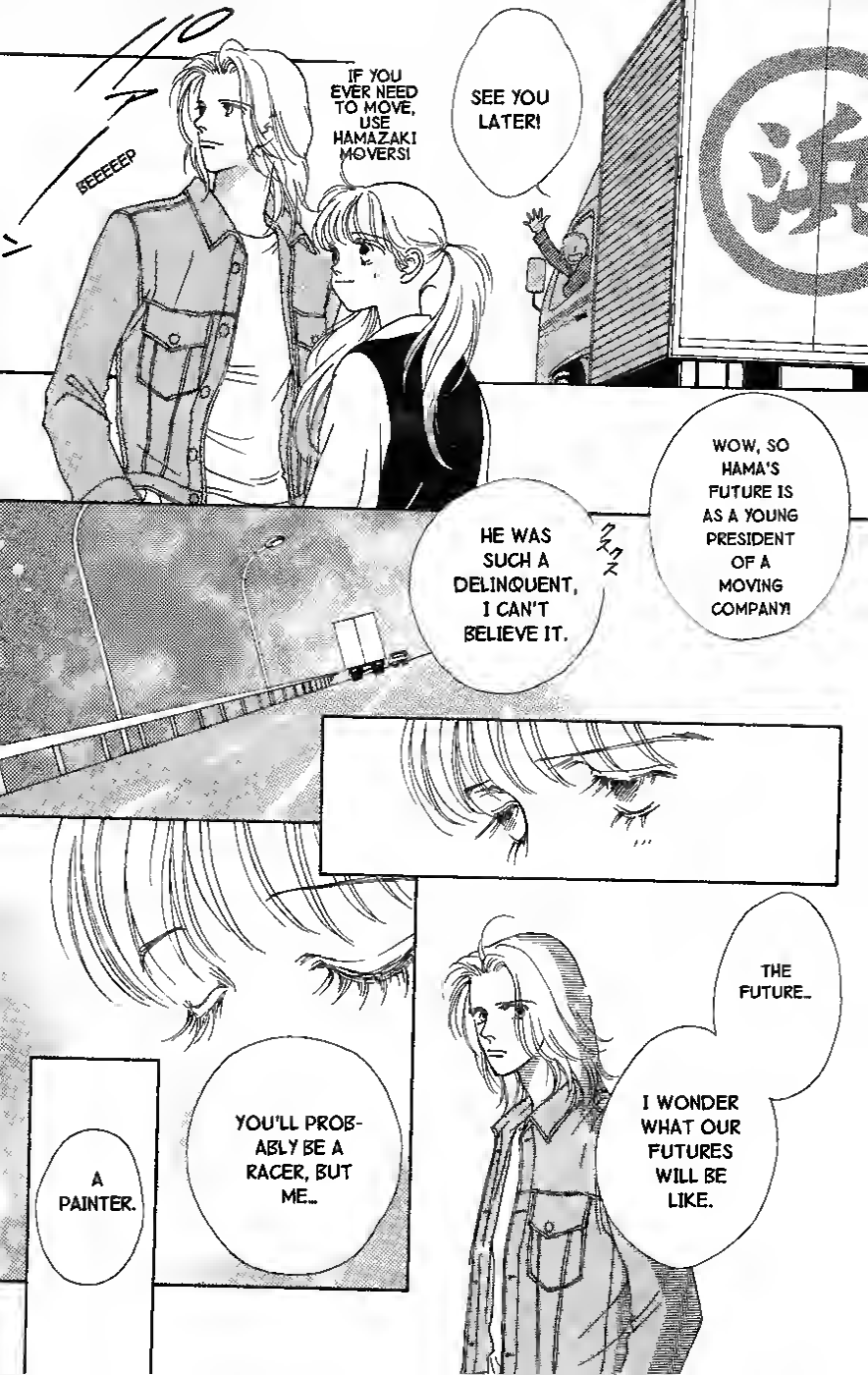
AAAAAAAAHH. REI, THE RIVER'S COMING AT ME!!
STU..
STUPID! YOU'RE THE ONE GOING AT THE RIVER!
AAAAAAHHHHHH
..あぁ
HIT THE BRAKES. THE BRAKES!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
BUT..
KIRA!?
KRAAASH
いったぁ~~っ

HANG ON TIGHT WITH YOUR LEGS.
YOUR UPPER BODY HAS TO BE RELAXED.
OH, HE'S STANDING.
BUT THE BIKE WON'T GO WHERE I WANT IT TO!
YOU'RE RELYING TOO MUCH ON THE HANDLEBARS.
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LOWER BODY!
DON'T PUT ANY STRENGTH INTO THE HANDLEBARS.
YOU HAVE TO BECOME ONE WITH THE BIKE.
THEN BANKING IS EASY. YOU CAN EVEN DO FIGURE EIGHTS, SEE?
VRKROOMM
AND THEN...



SWOOSH
YAY
WOW WOW WOW!!
HEY, CAN'T YOU TURN THIS INTO A CAREER?
PUT ON A SHOW AND CHARGE MONEY!
YOU'RE BECOMING MORE LIKE ME.
!
BEEP BEEEEEP

おおい
HAMA!
WHAT'RE YOU TWO DOING?
WE'RE PRACTICING RIDING. KIRA WANTED TO TRY IT.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? ARE YOU WORKING?
IT'S THE FAMILY BUSINESS ...
I DON'T HAVE THE BRAINS TO GO TO COLLEGE,
SO THEY TOLD ME TO TAKE ON THE FAMILY BUSINESS. WE HAVE A MOVING COMPANY.
HEY, WE'RE GOING...
OH, YEAH!
HOW'D YOU MANAGE TO GRADUATE...?
IT'S A MIRACLE!
YOU TOO, REI. I HEARD YOU MOVED ON TO THE NEXT GRADE.


BEEEEEP
IF YOU EVER NEED TO MOVE, USE HAMAZAKI MOVERS!
SEE YOU LATER!
WOW, SO HAMA'S FUTURE IS AS A YOUNG PRESIDENT OF A MOVING COMPANY!
HE WAS SUCH A DELINQUENT, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
THE FUTURE...
I WONDER WHAT OUR FUTURES WILL BE LIKE.
YOU'LL PROBABLY BE A RACER, BUT ME...
A PAINTER.

YOU CAN DO IT, YOU'VE GOT TALENT.
W..WELL ..
IT'D BE NICE.
IT'S NOT SO EASY, YOU KNOW.
RIGHT?
BUT I WOULD PAY MONEY FOR THAT PAINTING.
NOTHING TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT I MODELED FOR IT!
MY DREAMS AREN'T QUITE AS CONCRETE AS YOURS.
BUT YOU WON THAT CRAZY COMPETI-TION LAST YEAR.
HMM, I GUESS THE ART WORLD IS PRETTY TOUGH, TOO.
THERE ARE ONLY A SELECT FEW WHO CAN MAKE A LIVING AS A PAINTER.
YOU DON'T GET ANYWHERE BY WINNING ONE THING.
UM...
I'M SORRY, REI.

I KNOW I SAID I WOULD GIVE YOU THE PAINTING AFTER THE SHOW...
BUT BEFORE I KNEW IT, IT WAS HANGING IN THE SCHOOL LOBBY.
THAT'S FINE, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO PAINTED IT...
OH, YEAH...
UM... AND...
ABOUT MARS...
MS. KANEKO FROM THE ART DEPARTMENT IS HAVING A SHOW IN GINZA, AND SUGGESTED I SHOW IT THERE.
THAT IS...
SHE SAID THAT IT WOULD BE AN ADVANTAGE FOR ME FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE TO SEE IT.
AN ADVANTAGE...
WELL, FOR HER, TOO.
YOUR PAINTING GETS PEOPLE TALKING. I GUESS IT'S THE WHOLE PULLING-IN-THE-CROWDS THING?
GOD.
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SAYING BAD THINGS ABOUT PEOPLE?
BECAUSE I'M A BAD PERSON.

REALLY.
AT LEAST TO ME.
...
OH, REALLY?
NO..
YOU'RE REALLY A GOOD PERSON.
YOU'RE THE GREATEST PERSON IN THE WORLD.

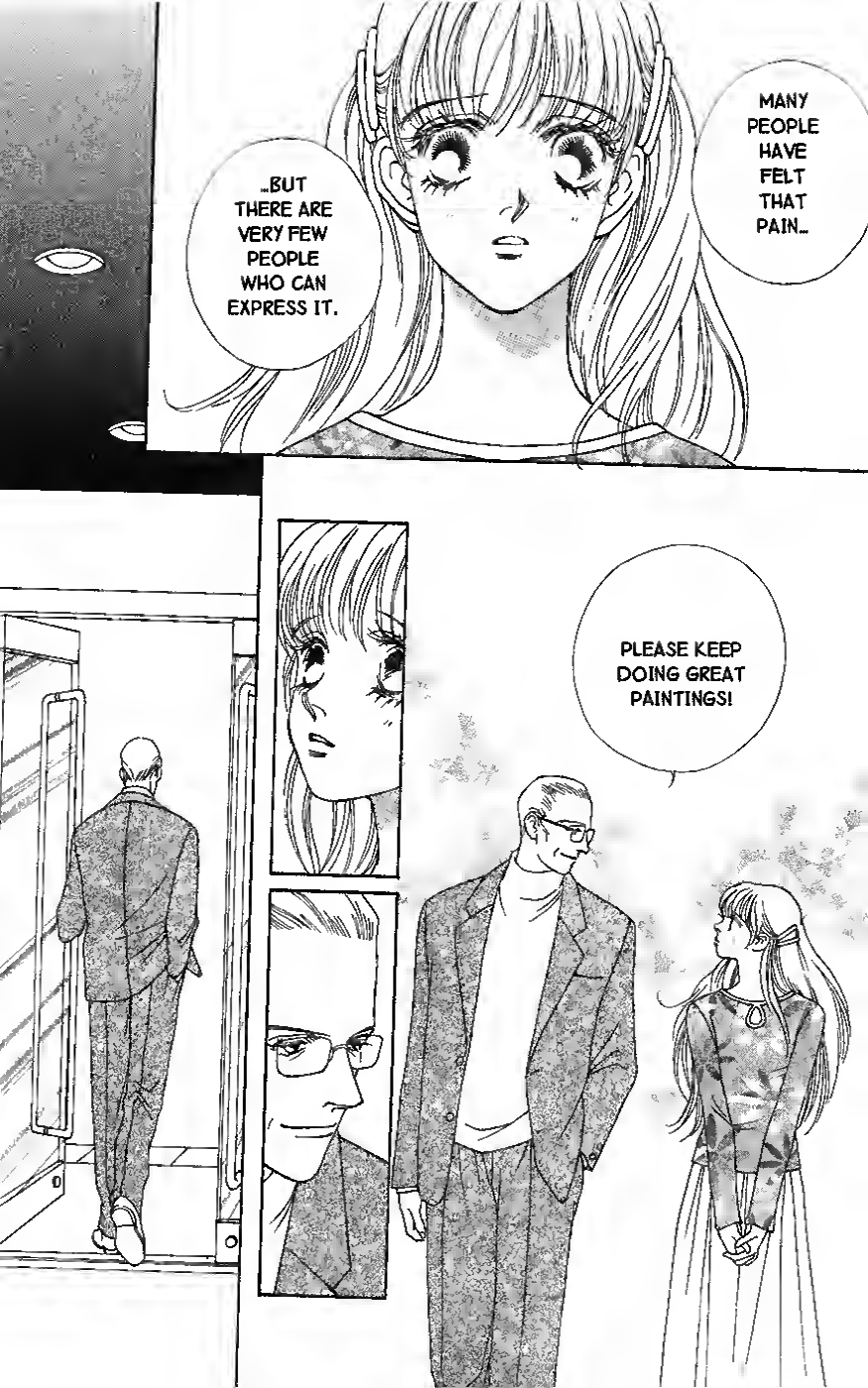
I'M SORRY TO MAKE YOU DO THIS...
DURING YOUR SPRING BREAK.
HAVE ALL THE GUESTS SIGN THE GUEST BOOK.
IT'S FINE. I'M FREE ANYWAY.
WELL, I'LL BE BACK AT 3:00. GOOD LUCK!
YOU'RE FREE? YOU'RE PROBABLY BUSY GOING ON DATES WITH THIS GUY, RIGHT?
YES, BUT REI'S BUSY WITH HIS JOB, TOO.
MARS
KIRA ASO

'GO TO COLLEGE...'
'DON'T WORRY ABOUT MONEY...'
'TO WIN SUCH A GREAT AWARD AND THEN LET IT GO...'
'IT WOULD BE AN UNFAIR SHAME TO YOUR LATE FATHER...'
'YOUR CREATIVE TALENT ALL CAME FROM HIM...'
GASP
CREAK
OH!
THE GUEST-BOOK!

UM...
EXCUSE ME, HOW MUCH IS THIS PAINTING?
UH...
THAT PAINTING ISN'T FOR SALE.

MARS
KIRA ASO
YOU'RE THE ARTIST..?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT'S NOT FOR SALE?
I'D LIKE TO MEET THE ARTIST IF I COULD.
UM..
I'M THE ONE WHO PAINTED THAT.
HMMM. SO THE MODEL IS A FRIEND OF YOURS FROM SCHOOL?
YES.
I TOLD HIM I WOULD GIVE HIM THE PAINTING IN EXCHANGE FOR MODELING FOR ME.
I SEE... THAT'S TOO BAD.
I WAS JUST WALKING BY WHEN THIS PAINTING CAUGHT MY EYE.
MARS
KIRA ASO

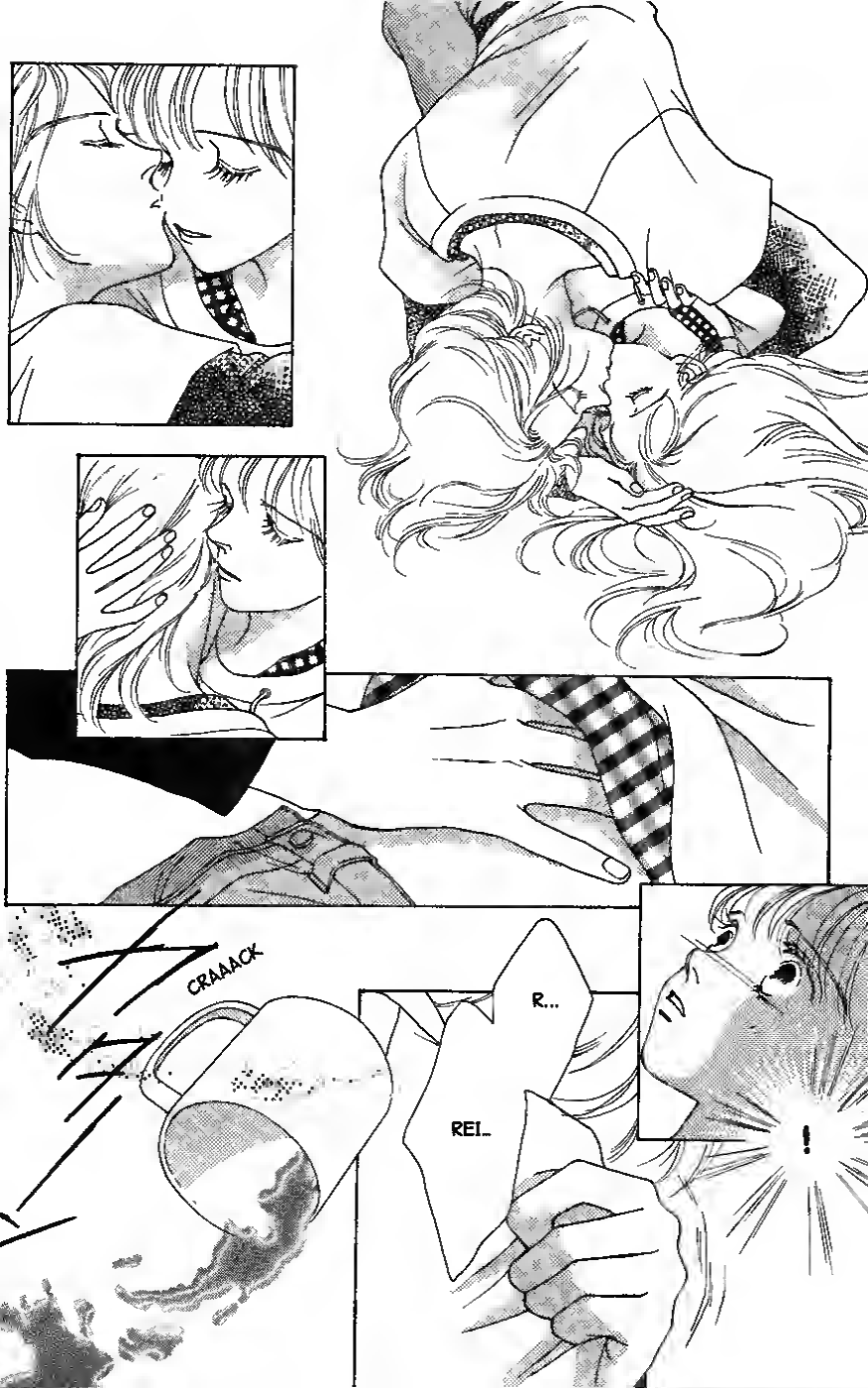
ANGER OR SADNESS ARE DIFFERENT...
THEY LEAVE AN INDELIBLE MARK.
EVEN AFTER THE WOUND HEALS...
YOU CAN NEVER FORGET THE PAIN COMPLETELY.
IT'S UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL...
BUT YOU SENSE THAT THERE'S SOMETHING LIKE PAIN WITHIN THE BEAUTY.
IT'S A GOOD PAINTING.
THE THINGS THAT REALLY SHAKE THE HUMAN SOUL AREN'T BEAUTY OR KINDNESS.
BUT...
ALTHOUGH SUCH THINGS ARE CERTAINLY MOVING, BUT THOSE FEELINGS DON'T LAST LONG.


MANY PEOPLE HAVE FELT THAT PAIN..
..BUT THERE ARE VERY FEW PEOPLE WHO CAN EXPRESS IT.
PLEASE KEEP DOING GREAT PAINTINGS!

THE GUEST BOOK!
YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT!
205 KASHINO
WHO THE HELL...
TURNS DOWN GETTING PAID FOR A PAINTING?
BECAUSE YOU'RE THE REAL OWNER...
YOU IDIOT! THAT DEPENDS ON THE SITUATION.

IF SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENS AGAIN, LET ME KNOW.
I'LL NEGOTIATE FOR YOU!!!!
YOU KNOW... NEGOTIATING DOESN'T MEAN THREATENING
BUT HE WAS REALLY HANDSOME.
YOU KNOW HOW GENTLEMEN SOUND A CERTAIN WAY? HE WAS TOTALLY LIKE THAT...
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WERE MEN LIKE THAT IN JAPAN.
HMM...
YOU'RE SURPRISINGLY INTO OLDER MEN.
WHY DON'T YOU SEEK THE OLD MAN OUT AND HAVE HIM BE YOUR SUGAR DADDY?
WHAT ARE YOU MAD ABOUT?
I'M NOT MAD.

I DON'T OWN A SUIT.
AND I'VE NEVER WORN COLOGNE.
IF ANYTHING, I JUST SMELL LIKE GREASE.
BUT I LIKE THE SMELL OF GREASE.
YOUR HAIR'S GETTING LONG.

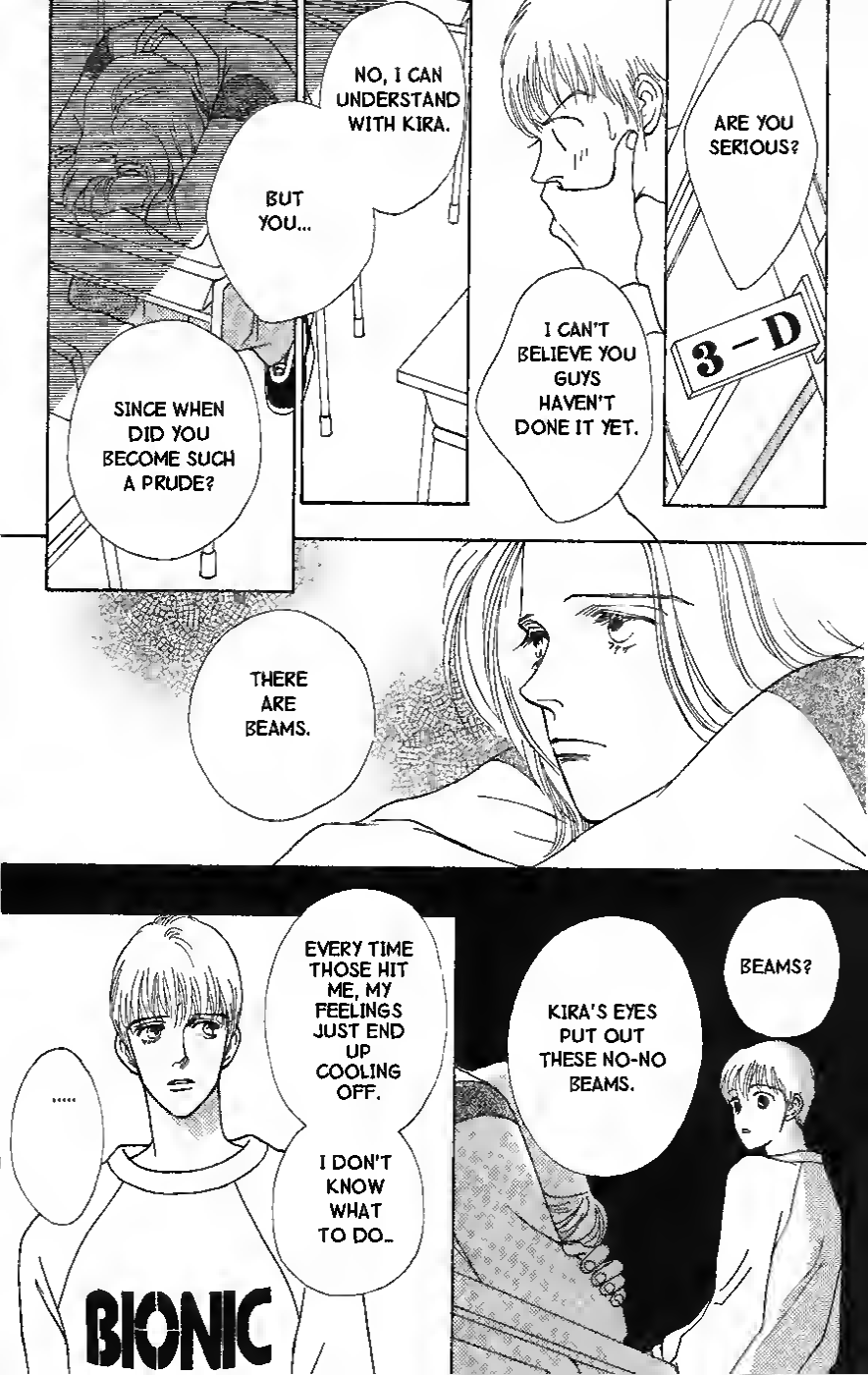

CRAAACK
R...
REI..
!

OH...
I'LL MAKE SOMETHING.
I...I'M GETTING KIND OF HUNGRY.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO EAT?
SLAM
TOK TOK
I'LL GO SHOPPING.
I DON'T CARE.

I WANT TO GOBBLE YOU UP.
SWEET KIRA...
TOK TOK

YOU'RE KIDDING ME!?
YOU AND REI AREN'T HAVING SEX?
I CAN UNDERSTAND WITH YOU, BUT THERE'S NO WAY THAT REI WOULD SETTLE FOR THAT!
HARUMI, YOUR VOICE!
THAT'S WEIRD THAT A GUY WHO LIKES GIRLS THAAAAAT MUCH WOULDN'T TRY TO TOUCH YOU.
THERE WERE A COUPLE TIMES WHERE SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED..

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT.
WHY WOULD YOU PULL AWAY IF YOU LOVE HIM?
BUT I ALWAYS PULL AWAY.
IT HAPPENED AGAIN DURING SPRING BREAK, AND IT'S BEEN AWKWARD.
3-A
AND NOW THAT WE'RE IN DIFFERENT CLASSES...
IT'S BECOME EVEN HARDER TO SEE HIM.

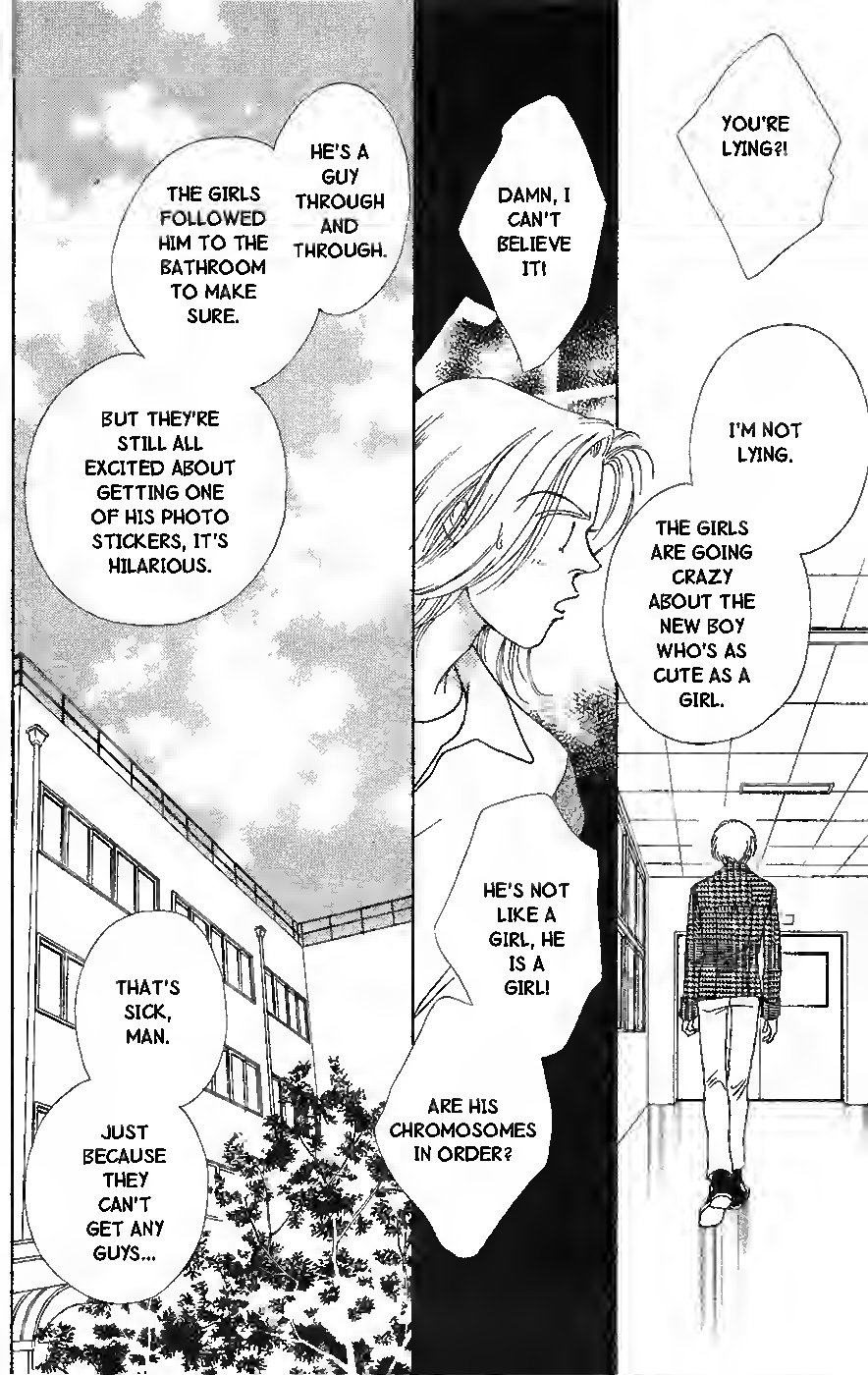

NO, I CAN UNDERSTAND WITH KIRA.
BUT YOU...
SINCE WHEN DID YOU BECOME SUCH A PRUDE?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
3-D
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GUYS HAVEN'T DONE IT YET.
THERE ARE BEAMS.
BEAMS?
KIRA'S EYES PUT OUT THESE NO-NO BEAMS.
EVERY TIME THOSE HIT ME, MY FEELINGS JUST END UP COOLING OFF.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO..
.....
BIONIC

HOW RUDE. I'M NOT AN ANIMAL, YOU KNOW!
ARE YOU SURE YOU AREN'T COMING ON TOO STRONG?
KIRA'S TOTALLY INEXPERIENCED, UNLIKE YOU, YOU KNOW.
YOU WERE A TOTAL BEAST BEFORE YOU MET KIRA.
HOW MANY GIRLS DID YOU SLEEP WITH?
YOU HAD IT TOO EASY BEFORE. YOU SHOULD SUFFER A LITTLE.
IS SEX SUCH A BAD THING?

TOUCHING AND KISSING ARE NATURAL DESIRES, AREN'T THEY?
ESPECIALLY IF YOU LOVE THE OTHER PERSON.
YOU WANT TO TOUCH THEM MORE AND MAKE THEM ALL YOURS.
WELL, MAYBE IT'S JUST THAT I'M HORNY...
U..UM..
I ACTUALLY..
WE MEN ARE JUST LIKE THAT.
NO...
I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND.

WITH HARUMI THAT IS...
WE'VE GONE TO THAT LEVEL.
.....
DON'T SAY THAT!
WE'RE LIKE BROTHERS...
OH, SORRY.
DID I HIT YOUR FACE?
I...
KLONK
OH!

I'M OKAY.
BOW
CUTE.
IT'S A GUY.
MASAO KIRISHIMA
HE'S A SOPHOMORE.
BIONIC


YOU'RE LYING?!
I'M NOT LYING.
THE GIRLS ARE GOING CRAZY ABOUT THE NEW BOY WHO'S AS CUTE AS A GIRL.
DAMN, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
HE'S NOT LIKE A GIRL, HE IS A GIRL!
ARE HIS CHROMOSOMES IN ORDER?
THAT'S SICK, MAN.
JUST BECAUSE THEY CAN'T GET ANY GUYS...
BUT THEY'RE STILL ALL EXCITED ABOUT GETTING ONE OF HIS PHOTO STICKERS, IT'S HILARIOUS.
THE GIRLS FOLLOWED HIM TO THE BATHROOM TO MAKE SURE.
HE'S A GUY THROUGH AND THROUGH.

YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT REI, AREN'T YOU?
WHY CAN'T YOU IF YOU REALLY LOVE HIM?
IT'S NOT THAT I CAN'T...
IT'S JUST...
I FEEL LIKE IT'S FINE THE WAY IT IS.
IT'S TOTALLY FUN JUST AS WE ARE.

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT..
BUT.. BUT IF YOU REALLY LIKE THE OTHER PERSON, YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'LL FORGIVE THEM FOR ANYTHING.
YOU WANT TO GET TO KNOW THEM MORE.
HOW STRONG HIS ARMS ARE...
OR HOW MANLY HIS CHEST AND SHOULDERS ARE...
TO BE SQUEEZED TIGHT BY THOSE ARMS..
AND BECOME ONE WHEN YOU BURY YOUR FACE IN HIS CHEST..
I.. AM I JUST WEIRD?

NO...
IT'S REALLY CUTE.
IT MAKES ME JEALOUS.
I'M-
I'M SCARED.
IT'S SO FUN RIGHT NOW, AND I LIKE REI SO MUCH.
YOU KNOW, I...
SLEPT WITH TATSUYA

IT'S TRUE THAT THE TATSUYA FROM BEFORE AND TATSUYA NOW ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT.
I CAN'T SAY WHAT EXACTLY IS DIFFERENT...
BUT..
I THINK I'VE CHANGED, TOO.
TO BE LIKE FRIENDS OR BROTHER AND SISTER.. WAS REALLY FUN AND COMFORTABLE...
BUT I'M REALLY HAPPY THAT I SEE TATSUYA AS SOMEONE SPECIAL NOW

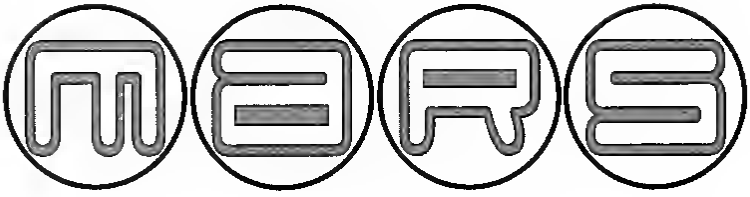
TATSUYA LIVES INSIDE OF ME AND I'M PROBABLY INSIDE TATSUYA...
THAT STRANGE FEELING MAKES ME HAPPY.
I DON'T WANT TO SAY IT, BUT...
YOU MIGHT BE OKAY WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE NOW...
IF ANOTHER GIRL SHOWS UP WHO LIKES HIM...
BUT I WONDER ABOUT REI...

WHY CAN'T YOU?
WHY CAN'T YOU GO OUT WITH ASAKO?
TELL US THE REASON WHY.
I TOLD YOU, I CAN'T BE INTO THAT RIGHT NOW.
SO WHY NOT?!
MASAO...

SEE, YOU CAN'T EVEN SAY!
DON'T JUST SAY WHAT'S CONVENIENT.
HOW CAN YOU DO THAT AFTER YOU SAID YOU LIKED ASAKO?
I MEANT AS A FRIEND
I TOLD YOU THAT SHE'S FINE TO START OUT AS FRIENDS!
.....
BUT THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE I LIKE.
WHO'S THAT?
THAT SENIOR...

THAT SENIOR...
REI KASHINO.
TO BE CONTINUED...

Coming Soon...



Volume Six

Kira and Rei are definitely in love—but no one said love was easy. When a new guy enrolls in their school, he instantly develops a big crush on both Rei and Kira. (Gulp!) To make matters worse, it turns out that this mysterious stranger is actually a face from Rei's violent past. Slowly, Kira begins to discover Rei's darker side, but she's not so sure she likes what she sees. As scandalous stories and shocking secrets are revealed, Kira hopes beyond hope that their love for each other will be able to conquer all.

Manga/Romance
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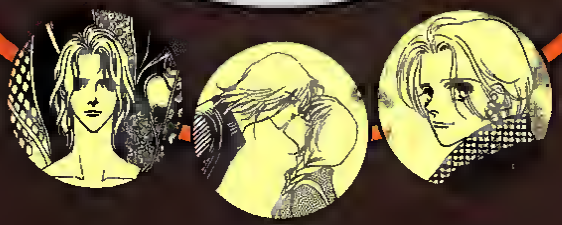
100% AUTHENTIC MANGA

Under Pressure

Kira and Rei's roller-caaster romance cantin-ues! When Rei suddenly gets ill, Kiro takes care af him at his apartment...and ends up sleeping aver. After their night together, Rei finally tells Kira the real reasan his twin brother Sei killed himself: Rei told him a secret he knew Sei wauld never be able to handle. Kira tries to camfart Rei, but secretly wanders if mere wards have the pawer ta ease the pain Rei harbars deep inside. Meanwhile, Kira's best friend, Harumi, warns Kiro if she daesn't stort sleeping with Rei saan, he'll probably break up with her. Ouch! Kira's warries deepen when Rei's ex-girlfriend tells him she's still in lave with him—and will da anything to win him back. With the pressure maunting by the minute, Kira is abaut ta make the biggest decisians af her life!

An epic romance that spans 15 valumes, MARS is ane af Japan's mast papular camics far teen girls ever.



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